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THE ABSENT FATHER  
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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Southern California  
School of Theology at Claremont

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Religion

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by  
Willard G. Ilefeldt  
"

June 1969

116

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The psychogenesis of some personality disorders may be traced directly or indirectly to the absent father. The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of the psychic influence an absent father may have on his children, his wife, and himself. The effects of a father's absence from his family are described in numerous professional journals concerned with sociology, anthropology, psychology, medicine, criminology, and other disciplines. However, these references often minimize the effects of an absent father in favor of the importance of the mother to the healthy growth of a family. This study is based on a comprehensive survey of available pertinent literature with the purpose of focusing proper attention on the absent father's effect on a family. An evaluation of this literature is offered to provide conclusions that may be helpful in family and marriage counseling. This study places particular emphasis on the role of the clergyman in counseling members of a family without a father.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the research of literature dealing with (1) the father's traditional role in the family, (2) the emergence of the mother dominated or matricentric household, and (3) the effect of the loss of a father upon the family.

Five chapters of the study were developed on the basis of literature concerned with the effects of the absent father on a child's development during the classic psychosexual stages.

In addition, a survey was made at Metropolitan State Hospital to determine the number of psychotic patients who had experienced a father loss prior to the age of fifteen. The results of this survey led the author to investigate additional literature dealing with the effects of father loss on the psychogenesis of schizophrenia, particularly in male patients.

Beyond this, the study also describes the results of the author's investigation of literature dealing with the effects of father loss on delinquent behavior and suicide.

The comments and suggestions of Leon Oettinger, M.D. and pediatrician of San Marino, California; Donald H. Rhoades, Professor of Philosophy of Religion;

and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Professor of Pastoral Counseling, both the latter of the School of Theology, Claremont, California, were invaluable in developing a frame of reference for this work.

### 3. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter II will summarize the literature dealing with the roles of the father in contemporary American Society. It is shown here that society's expectations of the roles played by the father are often in contradiction to the roles actually played by him within the household. These contradictions are discussed at the outset because they indicate the confusion in society that causes conflict within a family. These conflicts often lead to divorce, separation, or desertion, which are some of the major causes producing an absent father. This chapter will also discuss the historical, ethnic and economic reasons why fathers often leave their families other than incompatibility.

Chapters III, IV, V, VI, and VII describe the father's role and the consequence of his absence at each of the five psychosexual stages of the child's development. A systematic evaluation will be made and conclusions will be drawn from the evidence presented.

Chapter VIII presents evidence which suggests the influence an absent father has upon the individual who



later becomes an institutionalized mental patient, particularly the male schizophrenic.

Chapter IX presents evidence which suggests the influence an absent father has upon the individual who suffers a character disorder such as delinquency, or a person who later commits or attempts suicide.

Chapter X is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with reconciling impaired relationships which occur between married couples. It will list and discuss tools at our disposal for preventing the breakup of marriage and the family. Particular attention will be devoted to the clergyman and the uniqueness of his role as the reconciler of broken relationships. The advantages which the clergyman has over the secular marriage counselor will be stressed. These advantages will be based on the clergyman's vocational commitment to upholding the church's public image as the extended family of the community which is uniquely and universally concerned with the preservation of family unity.

The second part of Chapter X will focus attention upon divorce and the broken family, and how the absent father family may be helped to survive their brokenness. Particular attention is directed to the attitude of the churches and clergymen in regard to divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons.

Chapter XI suggests how the church may assist the family in adjusting to the father's absence. Primarily, it covers the role of the clergyman who counsels with all affected members of a broken family. Suggestions made are based on conclusions drawn from the studies cited in the earlier chapters. This chapter also serves as a systematic summary of conclusions which may be helpful to the pastor in counseling families in which an absent father occurs.

Chapter XII briefly lists and comments on the possible direction that further scientific investigation on the absent father may take.

#### 4. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The literature available for reference in this study is occasionally based on observation rather than controlled experiments. Because such literature lacks scientific exactness, the author considers this to be an unavoidable limitation.

The term "absent father" is used in this study to mean a father who is physically absent. It is understood, of course, that an emotionally absent father frequently causes greater psychic harm to some children than his physical absence would. Occasionally, therefore, unavoidable inferences will be made about the

effects an emotionally absent father has upon his offspring from studies dealing with the effects a physically absent father has upon them. No attempt, however, will be made to explore the emotionally absent father in depth. This study is thus delimited. Furthermore, an emotional absence, described variously as "rejection," "detached attitude toward his children," "grievous physical abuse," "poor communication with his children," and the like, are subject to faulty reporting and evaluation, which result in errors of interpretation and render them useless for purposes of scientific measurement and comparisons.

The effects an absent father has upon his offspring will be limited to the study of this phenomenon during the five classic psychosexual stages only. No attempt will be made to explore the effects an absent father has upon his children's children.

## CHAPTER II

### CAUSES OF FATHER ABSENCE

This chapter will discuss the various reasons why father absence occurs in contemporary American culture. Specifically, it will deal with the changing parental roles in the American family: 1) the change from father to mother dominated households, 2) the reasons why many fathers voluntarily absent themselves from their families, and 3) the change in attitude regarding divorce in America in recent times.

#### Father's Traditional Role

One of the primary causes of divorce, separation, and desertion is the phenomenon of the changing roles of father and mother. Traditionally, in the patriarchal family, the husband was dominant in most areas, whereas his wife's authority was relegated to the areas of childbearing and caring for the home. In the recent past, however, the mother has assumed the role of increasing dominance. This has created friction within the family, often causing it to break up. Historically, for the majority of people in America, the dominant marriage relationship was based on male authority and power. From 1820, when the United States began a

continuous record of immigration, until 1963, almost 43 million immigrants entered this country. They came from Europe (35 million), Asia (over 1 million), from the Americas (over 6 million) which includes Canada, South America, and Central America, and from Africa, Australia, New Zeland, and other countries and Oceania.<sup>1</sup> A multitude of cultures was represented, and each set of immigrants brought its own way of life which included its own conception of the family.<sup>2</sup> For the majority of immigrants, however, father-husband was the dominant authority figure.

The newly arrived immigrants stayed in the eastern port cities or they moved on and settled in the west. In the cities some immigrants (white Protestants in particular<sup>3</sup>) were speedily assimilated. Others, because of race and religion, sought refuge in ethnic ghettos and clung to the people and customs of their own group. Even second and third generation families often practiced cultural traits and lived by many of

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<sup>1</sup>Dept. of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Report (Washington, D. C.: 1963).

<sup>2</sup>Robert F. Winch, The Modern Family (New York: Holt, 1952), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Ruth Cavan, The American Family (New York: Crowell, 1956), p. 3.

the traditional standards of the original immigrants. These ethnic islands, few of which survive today--Chinatown, Harlem, the Amish of Pennsylvania--indicate the incompleteness of assimilation. These "islands" serve to maintain the minority culture, and thus to foster cultural separatism and pluralism. With the exception of the Negro family form (which will be discussed presently) the patriarchal family form has been maintained within these ethnic islands of the big cities.

The patriarchal family form was maintained in the farm families as a means of survival. Howard Beers paints an excellent picture of the parent's role in the function of the typical farm family.

Family groups were geographically isolated, economically self-sufficient and socially self-contained. Parents were often "the school, the church, in extreme cases the state." Fathers were austere dominant. Wives were obedient, faithful, subordinated in person and in law. Strict obedience was required of children. Actually, the subjection of wife and children to the father exemplified their common submission to natural processes, never completely understood, always uncertain. The common and paramount interest of family members in the outcome of the farm enterprise necessitated agreement on all matters. Farming and living were synonymous. There was need for an executive in each family who could give direction to the process of living. The natural executive was the father, hence our usual judgment that the farm family was patriarchal . . . There was a respect for authority, whether parental, religious or legal.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Howard W. Beers, "The Portrait of the Farm Family in Central New York State," American Sociological Review, II (1937), 591-600.

The phrase, "Parents were often the school, the church, in extreme cases the state," in the above quotation describes the isolated self-sufficiency of these farming families. Often the only book in many of these homes was the Bible. It often became a source-book for frontier law. Complete adherence to Scripture, the "holy Word," was conditioned into the lives of all the members of the family. There was little question that "wives be subject to (their) husbands."<sup>5</sup>

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. . . . Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.<sup>6</sup>

### Mother Dominated Household

Today, in many lower class families, the wife-mother has the authority and power. She is the adult of responsibility. The family is matriarchal because the husband-father is totally absent or may disappear for periods of time. The woman gains her authority by default and not by agreement or consent. When a husband-father is in the home, the marriage is often patriarchal, and becomes matriarchal once again only if the male

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<sup>5</sup>Colossians 3:18.

<sup>6</sup>Ephesians 5:22-24.

leaves. The lower class male's role is often different from that of the traditional patriarch in that he frequently wants the authority but not the responsibility.

The Negro family is uniquely matriarchal or mother dominated. Under slavery it was a common practice to keep mother and children together, but no such concern was exercised to keep the father in the slave family. Conditions of life for contemporary Negroes of low income have tended to perpetuate the maternal family form. Marital relationships among Negroes continue to be temporary. For instance, Price<sup>7</sup> reports that the 1965 census data show more Negro women divorced or separated than the 1960 census figures cited in the controversial Moynihan Report.<sup>8</sup> Price predicts that there will be a significant increase in the number of fatherless Negro families by 1970.

The Negro male is more frequently unemployed and unemployable than his white counterpart among the lower socio-economic families. The plight of the Negro male is generally more severe and widespread, but the unemployed and unemployable white male in the lower

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<sup>7</sup>Daniel O. Price, "The Marital Status of Negro Population in 1970" (Austin: University of Texas, 1965).

<sup>8</sup>Daniel P. Moynihan, The Negro Family (Washington, D. C.: Superintendent of Documents, March, 1965).



socio-economic family is confronted with a similar problem; males, unable to obtain work, must leave their families in search of work in another locality. This situation creates an absent father, often for a protracted period, at least until it is economically feasible for the father to have his family join him, if ever. Frequently, the unemployed male will leave his family because, being unemployable in his immediate locality, his absence makes it possible for his family to collect welfare aid. Often the only way for a father to support or to provide for his family is for him to leave it. As long as he remains absent from them his family is eligible for welfare. Were he to return to his family they would be deprived of this source of income. Were they to join him and he were still unemployed they would not be eligible for this aid. It is ironic that such welfare aid, charitably given to the "deserted family," creates an absent father and in many cases tends to prolong his absence once begun. An unemployable father whose family benefits economically by his absence can only assume that his absence is preferable to the family's welfare than is his presence.

#### Shared Responsibility and Authority

Patriarchal families are still found in some segments of the United States in a somewhat modified form,

including some rural areas, immigrant families, and among the lower and upper social classes. Bell claims that the middle class urban family represents the segments of the American society from which the patriarchal family has, for the most part, disappeared.<sup>9</sup>

Social analysts suggest that the middle class family of today tends to be matricentric because the wife has now taken over many of the family responsibilities once assumed by the father-husband. The authority and responsibility conferred upon the wife-mother is by default because when the husband is home, the marriage authority is likely to be shared by the husband and the wife.

Some writers--Gorer, Wylie, Strecker, to name a few--have become alarmed by the increasingly dominant role of mother. Their expressions of concern (to be discussed presently) are exaggerated perhaps, but the fact that mother has taken over some of the authority once exercised by father does produce tension between husband and wife over role expectations. If the husband resents the emerging dominating role of the wife and the diminution of his role of authority, frequent arguing may result. The children of such a family will have no

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<sup>9</sup>Robert R. Bell, Marriage and Family Interaction (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1963), p. 263.

clearly defined mother-father role to follow in their own lives when they become adults. They will have internalized a confused and undefined concept of male-female, mother-father roles. Consequently, they will tend to perpetuate similar problems within their own families. This is supported by Erikson who states that "children feel the tensions, insecurities, and rages of their parents even if they do not know their causes or witness their most overt manifestations."<sup>10</sup>

### The Rejected Father

According to Gorer, just as the thirteen colonies rejected the authority of England, so too has the contemporary father's authority been rejected by the American family. The American family is patriarchal in fictitious form only. "In few societies is the role of father more vestigial than in the United States."<sup>11</sup> The feminine standard of values is given reinforcement by the fact that school teachers in primary and secondary schools

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<sup>10</sup>Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), p. 99.

<sup>11</sup>Geoffrey Gorer, The American People (New York: Norton, 1964), p. 54.

are overwhelmingly women.<sup>12</sup> Erikson says:

The fact that the majority of teachers in elementary schools are women must be considered . . . because it often leads to a conflict with the "ordinary" boy's masculine identification as if knowledge were feminine, action masculine.<sup>13</sup>

Cavan observes that children are greatly affected by the attitudes of their middle class teachers toward them.<sup>14</sup>

Market researchers claim that three-quarters of retail purchases in the United States are made by women.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the most acerbic attack upon "momism" has been made by Wylie.<sup>16</sup> Strecker claims that mother is the cause of psychoneurosis among recruits in the armed forces, and also the main cause of schizophrenia.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>13</sup>Erikson, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>14</sup>Cavan, op. cit., p. 169.

<sup>15</sup>Gorer, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>16</sup>Philip Wylie, Generation of Vipers (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942).

<sup>17</sup>Edward A. Strecker, Their Mother's Sons (New York: Lippincott, 1946).

### Reasons for Changes in Father's Traditional Role

Recent literature commenting on the changing role of the father in contemporary society is summarized in the following quotation:

The original importance of the father's contribution to family life has not lessened, but the father's ability to fulfill his parental functions properly has been steadily decreasing.<sup>18</sup>

During the depression of the 30's when the migration from the "dust-bowl" to the cities took place, farming families moved from rural to urban locations, thereby adding to the unemployment problem in the cities. Insofar as the husband's traditional claim to authority is based upon his supporting his family, unemployment tended to undermine his authority position.

Another migration from farm to city took place following World War II. Small one-family, self-sufficient farms were forced to capitulate to the competition of commercial farm industries. In the moves from farm to cities, which took place during the depression and after the war, older attitudes were incompatible with modern urban conditions, and the father's role has diminished as an authority figure.

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<sup>18</sup>Everett S. Ostrovsky, Father to the Child (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1959), p. 9, underscoring this author's.

This is borne out by the fact that in today's urban society the activities of the father are likely to be carried on outside the home. Father's work is rarely shared by the children as it once was in rural farm life. Furthermore, traditional family owned and operated businesses in the city are becoming scarcer. The shop-owner hardly ever lives behind or above the store any more. The small neighborhood shop is vanishing; the supermarket and the department store are taking over. Father usually commutes to his place of business if it is family owned. Consequently, most fathers in urban and suburban families are at home only a few hours during the workday, if at all. Early feedings and bedtime for the young children do not contribute to the cultivation of a continuous emotional relationship between father and child. The young child can only picture the father's work-life in an abstract way. For the first few years of a child's life, father's infrequent presence tends to make father a kind of mysterious fantasy figure. Because of the infrequency of the father's presence in the home during the time when the child is most active, the child must rely upon the mother in fulfilling his everyday needs. The mother usually comes to be preferred by the child as a

source of reassurance, affection and help.<sup>19</sup> Most of father's traditional parental functions have been delegated to mother during the last generation or two.

Greater mobility, speedier travel, and the inter-state, international and intercontinental concept of big business has today tended to produce an absent father in some families. Extended business trips keep many fathers away from home for varying periods during the earlier, formative years of a growing family. In most business organizations it is the younger men who are likely to be away from home more frequently than the older men. Often the typical pattern of succession is for those who have spent their earlier years "on the road" in order to become eligible for executive positions of greater responsibility, keeps many younger men traveling so that they may step into higher positions at the "home office" when they become available. Generally, this occurs after the children have passed through adolescence and are already about to or are in the process of emancipating themselves from parental domination. Thus, many fathers "earn" the right to spend more time at home only to find that when this does

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<sup>19</sup>L. P. Gardner, "Analysis of Children's Attitudes to Fathers," Journal of Genetic Psychology, LXX (1947), 3-38.

occur the family no longer needs him; the children are now away at college or are married. Frequently, the "empty nest" causes husbands and wives to reassess their relationship as partners, for they no longer need to "preserve the marriage for the sake of the children." Divorce which takes place at this stage of life is not as critical for the family as when the children were younger. However, the more common divorce becomes the greater its acceptance by society.

#### Divorce Since the Turn of the Century

There has been an increase in the number of divorces since the turn of the century.<sup>20</sup> Although divorce in some form is permitted in all societies but encouraged in none, there are great differences in the degree of disapproval attached to it. "American opinion has gradually changed from sharp to rather mild disapproval."<sup>21</sup> Some church bodies, which have heretofore been officially and canonically strict in regard

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<sup>20</sup> Marriage and Divorce Rates. Source: Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Service; annual report, Vital Statistics of the United States, 1965.

<sup>21</sup> Kingsly Davis, "Children of Divorce," Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis (eds.), Readings in Marriage and the Family (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), p. 357.



to divorce among its members, have become more lenient in the recent past.<sup>22</sup> In short, the attitude toward divorce in the United States does not carry as severe a social stigma as it once did.

Along with the change in attitude, tending to more general acceptance of divorce, it has become easier to terminate a marriage in the United States for various other reasons. In some states divorce is costly, often a long process. Other states require a much shorter residency and the divorce court procedures are more rapid. Nevada, for instance, requires only a six-week residency, whereas other states require longer interlocutory or waiting periods before a divorce is considered final. With a state such as Nevada within speedy flying distance from any other state in the Union, the tendency is to make divorce more attractively available than in the past. Easier accessibility and convenience of divorce tends to invite the termination of a shaky marriage that might otherwise be preserved with a little more effort on the part of the couple.

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<sup>22</sup> Divorce will be discussed further in Chapter X.

### Father's Roles in Contemporary Society

Children are considered by society to be mother's main function, particularly when the child is an infant. Society does not expect much more of the father than that he be a good provider, and that he return home when his work does not prevent him from doing so.

The husband-father's patriarchal role has been inherited from the rural farm, European-Oriental, and ethnic ghetto past. Consequently, many father-husbands have not accepted the trend toward the matricentric household. Even now, officially at least, the husband-father is legally classified as the head of the family if he is present. He is also frequently charged with the legal support of the family when he is absent. Many legal prerogatives have been taken from him, however. For instance, husband and wife now have legal equality in such things as property rights, business responsibilities, and the right to vote. In short, as the husband has lost status, the wife has gained it.

A question arises. If father's role has diminished in our society, is his presence in the family important? Perhaps in the sometime distant future father's diminished role will be such that his absence will have little or no effect on the family. At the

present time, however, father's influence is still strong, and his absence does have an adverse effect upon his family. The remaining chapters of this study will deal with this question in detail.

### Conclusion

There are several factors and circumstances which have tended to produce an increasing number of absent fathers in the United States other than death and separation due to war, accidents, hospitalization, incarceration, and other outside causes. In many ways men have not adjusted themselves to sharing status with their wives. Husband-wife, father-mother roles are not clearly defined, and a disturbed family form emerges. When methods of dealing with the children are not agreed upon by husband and wife, the children suffer because they are the recipients of confused husband-wife, father-mother role expectations. The children internalize an equally confused role identity as future husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and the cycle is perpetuated. Consequently, when roles are not co-ordinated satisfactorily between husband and wife incompatibility between couples with children results. This incompatibility leads to divorce, separation and desertion, which are some of the major factors in producing an absent father.

States with more convenient laws in regard to divorce are more readily available to couples who contemplate dissolving their marriage. Speedy transportation, less expensive court costs, shorter residency requirements, and a greater affluence spread more widely among the general population, along with a more lenient attitude regarding divorce, has tended to increase the number of divorces in our country. As was shown earlier, both the Price and Moynihan reports describe the increase in divorce among Negro families. The conclusion to be drawn from these findings is that divorce is more accessible to the lower socio-economic population. Formerly, divorce would be considered too expensive for many of these people who can now afford to terminate their marriage legally. Religious and social pressures also kept many people from getting a divorce in the past. Although divorce still carries a social stigma, a more general acceptance of it has come about in the past half century.

Desertion has been called the "poor man's divorce" because legal divorce or an annulment could not be afforded or gotten through the regular channels. Although divorce is on the increase among the lower socio-economic families, desertion is still practiced for another economic reason. Often the father will "desert"

his family in search of work elsewhere so that his family may become eligible for welfare payments. Formerly, desertion was often a course of action taken by the husband in order to escape an intolerably incompatible marriage relationship because a legal divorce could not be afforded. Today, desertion is the action which is often taken by the husband-father so that his family may survive economically without him. The desertion of a father-husband who cares emotionally for his family but who cannot provide for them economically is a much greater psychic loss to his family than the irresponsible father who deserts his family in lieu of a divorce. In both cases, however, an absent father occurs.

Therefore, when an absent father situation occurs in a family caused by any one of a number of reasons, his absence can and does have adverse effects upon his children, his wife, and himself. The following five chapters will discuss this problem as it effects the child.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ORAL STAGE

The five classic psychoanalytic psychosexual stages of child development will be used in this study to form a framework for easier communication and to treat the material presented more systematically.

1. Oral (infancy stage, from birth to 12-15 months)
2. Anal (baby stage, from 15 months to 2 and 1/2 years)
3. Phallic (play age, 3 to 6 years)
4. Latency (school age, 6 to 12 years)
5. Puberty (adolescence)

Before discussing the father's role and the significance of his absence during the oral stage, a brief comment upon his importance during the pre-natal stage is appropriate at this point.

#### Emotional Stresses During Pregnancy

The "old wives' tales" regarding the mother during pregnancy and the effect outside stresses have upon her have been refuted by both professionals and laymen alike. However, recent scientific investigations

have given some credence to these "old wives' tales."

Are the mother's emotional states communicated to the fetus? If so, how, and what are the possible effects? These questions have been asked by Montagu, and his answer is: "Yes, there is good evidence that the mother's emotional states are, at least in chemical form, transmitted to the fetus."<sup>1</sup> In his article he presents the findings of several researchers who conclude that emotional disturbances in the pregnant mother produce a marked increase in the activity of the fetus. This is accomplished through the neurohumoral system, which is composed of the interrelated nervous and endocrine systems acting through the fluid medium of the blood. He concludes that the infants of mothers who were emotionally disturbed during pregnancy, will be born as, and develop as, hyperactive, irritable, squirming infants who cry for feeding every two or three hours instead of sleeping through the four-hour interval between feedings. He quotes Sontag:

He is to all intents and purposes a neurotic infant when he is born--the result of an unsatisfactory fetal environment. In this instance he has

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<sup>1</sup>M. F. Ashley Montague, "Constitutional and Prenatal Factors in Infant and Child Health," in Symposium on the Healthy Personality (New York: Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation, 1950), pp. 148-169.

not had to wait until childhood for the bad home situation or other cause to make him neurotic. It has been done for him before he has even seen the light of day.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the scientific evidence presented by Montagu, the conclusion to be drawn is that a mother's emotional state during pregnancy has a bearing on the well-being of the infant. A father's importance during his wife's pregnancy is generally undervalued. The author suggests, therefore, that the father's presence during his wife's pregnancy has both good and bad aspects:

1) Father's presence is "good" if he has a good relationship with his wife, giving her the concern and affection which will keep his wife's emotional stresses to a minimum.

2) Father's presence is "bad" if there is constant bickering between them, symptomatic of an impaired relationship between husband and wife.

Consequently, if tension exists between the husband and wife, particularly in situations of severe incompatibility, the husband's absence may be the better of two evils. On the other hand, when a pregnant wife is left without a husband she may lack the assurance and

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<sup>2</sup>L. W. Sontag, "War and the Fetal Maternal Relationship," Marriage and Family Living, VI (1944), 1-4.



security that she and her child will be provided for. She may also be under emotional stress because of guilt over her husband's leaving or loss. The unwed expectant mother is further burdened by shame, and uncertainty over her child's future, that is, whether to let her baby be adopted or to keep it. In any case, her emotional state is such that the fetus may be adversely affected.

### 1. FATHER'S PRESENCE DURING THE ORAL STAGE

During infancy the baby's somatic needs are satisfied from outside himself. His creature comforts come from mother or from a mother surrogate. Many writers feel that during this period of development the healthy emotional and psychal growth of the child depends on the father only indirectly. John Bowlby says:

In the young child's eyes father plays second fiddle . . . nevertheless, fathers have their uses even in infancy. Not only do they provide for their wives to enable them to devote themselves unrestrictedly to the care of the infant and toddler, but, by providing love and companionship, they support her emotionally and help her maintain that harmonious contented mood in the aura of which the infant thrives.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Bowlby, Maternal Care and Mental Health And Deprivation of Maternal Care, 2 Vol. in 1 (New York: Shocken Books, 1966), p. 13.

Other writers suggest that father or a father substitute is much more important to the child than Bowlby gives him credit. For instance, Forrest points out that "an infant learns to distinguish between masculinity and femininity first through being held differently to differently feeling bodies by the parents and by being spoken to in voices of different pitch."<sup>4</sup>

Lerner says that "the father plays almost as important a role as the mother in introducing the child to the world."<sup>5</sup>

Meerloo's study<sup>6</sup> reflects the same view that the father's "cutting of the cord" symbolizes the child's independence of its symbiotic ties with the mother, and that the child's relationship to the father determines the nature of the initial transference as well as later trial relationships.

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<sup>4</sup> Tess Forrest, "Paternal Roots of Female Character Development," Contemporary Psychoanalysis, III:1 (1966), 21-28.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel H. Lerner, "Effects of Desertion on Family Life," Social Casework, XXXV (1954), 3-8.

<sup>6</sup> Joost A. M. Meerloo, "The Father Cuts the Cord: The Role of the Father as Initial Transference Figure," American Journal of Psychotherapy, X (1956), 471-480.

## Discussion

Father fulfills a much needed function as the first loving and tender "stranger" to the infant-mother dyad. The child makes progress from a symbiotic and primary dependency upon mother to a more mature and secondary dependency which is separate and different. This separation from the "good breast"<sup>7</sup> to the world of "others" establishes identities between primary and secondary dependencies.

If we look at the oral stage from the standpoint of Erikson's basic personality tasks of infancy--Basic Trust versus Basic Mistrust<sup>8</sup>--the basic sense of trust which a child obtains from his mother may be upset by the father's rough handling of the child. On the other hand, if the mother is not a primary source of tenderness, the father may help to engender basic trust in the child by a gentle handling of the child.

How the child's emotional and physical well-being may best be served by the father at this stage may be

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<sup>7</sup> Melanie Klein's term.

<sup>8</sup> Erik H. Erikson, "Eight Stages of Man," in his Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 247-251.

summed up as follows: the way the father treats the mother is likely to influence the mother's treatment of the child. That is, if the father treats the mother in a loving, warm, and considerate manner, the relationship between them is more likely to be reflected in a salutary treatment of the child by the mother. On the other hand, if there is constant conflict between the mother and the father, the resultant tension is likely to be manifested by her manner toward the child. If, for instance, the husband is inordinately jealous of the child and the mother must cope with her husband's demands as well as the child's, a similar condition may occur.

## 2. FATHER ABSENCE DURING THE ORAL STAGE

Freud and Burlingham<sup>9</sup> have found that the absence of the father occurring between the sixth and eighteenth months has a most serious and adverse effect on the child's socialization and emotional development. Lerner says:

Even in the first year of the child's life, the disappearance of the father arouses a feeling of loss and great anxiety. Children at the age of two can verbalize their feelings. "Why doesn't Daddy come home?" they ask.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham, Infants Without Families (New York: International Universities Press, 1944), pp. 101-116.

<sup>10</sup>Lerner, op. cit.

Stolz's study of war-absent fathers found that father's war absence induces an unusually high level of identification of mother and child.<sup>11</sup> She and her collaborators found that with no husband to care for, the mother devoted most of her time to the child. The child became a partial substitute for the absent husband, filling an emotional void in the mother's life. Focusing most of her attention on her child, the child was subject to overindulgence and even overstimulation by the affection he received.

In the Levy study of twenty overprotective mothers, nineteen of the children studied were males.<sup>12</sup> This fact leads one to speculate that these mothers were perhaps "overprotecting" their children to compensate for an emotional void which was not being satisfied by their husbands, all of whom were characterized as being submissive to their wives.

The adverse effect of a father's absence on the mother may create an attitude on her part that may have a profound effect upon the child. This is supported by the Ross and Johnson statement concerning the attitude

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<sup>11</sup> Lois Meek Stolz et al., Father Relation of War-Born Children (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> David M. Levy, Maternal Overprotection (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), pp. 159-160.

of the mother during the feeding of the child.

If the mother fondles him (the infant), puts him to the breast gently and lovingly, and patiently helps him to learn to suck, his first adjustment to another person is a good one and he learns to expect other people to be friends too.<sup>13</sup> If, on the other hand, she forces her breast or the bottle into the tender mucous membrane of the infant's mouth, she may hurt him and throw him into a state of panic, which he will show with random motor activity and inability to suck. He will become afraid and refuse to nurse . . . he is in a state of nervous tension caused by the handling of an anxious and unloving mother.<sup>14</sup>

### Summary of Conclusions

When father is absent there is a danger that the mother may make the child a partial substitute for her absent husband in order to satisfy her own needs.

The father's absence during the oral or nursing stage of the child's development may create in the mother anxieties and tensions directly resulting from the husband's absence. The mother's nervous tension may be transferred to the child in her manner of feeding and handling the infant.

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<sup>13</sup> See the discussion section on page 30 of this study in reference to the basic trust engendered in the child by the father as the first stranger to the infant-mother dyad.

<sup>14</sup> Helen Ross and Adelaid M. Johnson, Psychiatric Interpretation of the Growth Process (Chicago: Institute for Psychoanalysis, 1961), p. 3.

The father's absence denies the child a tactile awareness of being handled by a male, or hearing a deeper voice than the mother, further hindering the child from becoming introduced into the world beyond mother.

There is a period in the early development of an infant, perhaps during the oral stage or later, in which the father's entry into the infant's life is psychologically critical to the healthy development of the child. Studies which support this view are few. The reason for this is because mother has been and is still considered much more important in the development of the child than is the father, hence the greater amount of research done on the mother-child relationship than the father-child relationship.<sup>15</sup> The Stolz and the Freud-Burlingham studies were conducted during the war in which circumstances permitted experimentation that was unique. Both studies suggest a period in the early development of the infant in which the father's entry is important to the healthy development of the child. A correlative conclusion to be drawn from this would be that when a father is absent during this period the child suffers the loss of his father's entry into its life.

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<sup>15</sup> Bowlby, op. cit. See also John Nash, "The Father in Contemporary Culture and Current Psychological Literature," Child Development, XXXVI (1965), 261-297.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ANAL STAGE

#### 1. FATHER'S PRESENCE DURING THE ANAL STAGE

This is the period of toilet and habit training for the child. In many ways this is one of the most critical periods in the development of the small child. He becomes more active. He walks. He explores and discovers. He touches things that are not to be touched. He reaches and knocks things down that are easily broken. His adventures are encouraged on the one hand, but on the other they are curbed. He is conditioned to do some things but not others. Some activities are considered "good" while others are "bad."

Many children at this age are beginning to find that they are the victims of their parent's opposing expectations. Some American parents want their children to grow up to be free, honest, forthright, and courageous. A child who is expected to be free, honest, forthright and courageous, finds that this does not always apply when he talks back or disagrees with his parents. Some parents want the child to behave and do what they tell him. The child finds that he is expected to be bold and submissive, and finds it impossible to be both at the



same time. The child learns that what his parents really want of him is to be submissive in some situations and bold in others. In other words, they expect him to be bold and courageous with children his own age and size, but submissive and obedient to his parents and other adults.

### Toilet and Habit Training

Whiting and Child,<sup>1</sup> who studied child rearing throughout the world, have claimed that children of the American middle-class are among the most restricted anywhere regarding toilet training. Along these same lines, Erikson comments:

As far as anality . . . is concerned . . . everything depends on whether the cultural environment wants to make something of it. There are cultures where the parents ignore anal behavior. . . . Our western civilization, and especially certain classes within it, have chosen to take the matter more seriously.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Sears, Maccoby, and Levin<sup>3</sup> have

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<sup>1</sup>J. W. M. Whiting and I. L. Child, Child Training and Personality: A Cross-Cultural Study (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).

<sup>2</sup>Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), pp. 66-67.

<sup>3</sup>Robert R. Sears, Eleanor E. Maccoby and Harry Levin, Patterns of Child Rearing (New York: Row, Peterson, 1957).

concluded that severe control training, measured by the amount of punishment used to induce control, is quite ineffectual in producing the desired results.

### Discussion

Just what is the father's role in light of the possible harm punitiveness and otherwise severe control training may have upon the child? For instance, if father is submissive and leaves control training entirely to the mother, the child runs the risk of maternal domination in which the child may be subjected to maternal overprotection,<sup>4</sup> severe toilet training, and the like. Father is, by being submissive, "absent" by default. Yet on the other hand, if father takes a more active role in control training he may do one or more of the following:

1. He could support mother in severe training, which would reinforce our Western cultural emphasis on greater control during anality,<sup>5</sup> leading to compulsiveness or a paranoid personality.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>David M. Levy, Maternal Overprotection (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), pp. 159-160.

<sup>5</sup>Erikson, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

<sup>6</sup>Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 254.

2. He could oppose mother, which would result in a conflict between the parents. This could produce tensions and insecurities in the child.<sup>7</sup>

3. He could vacillate between the role of father in support of mother or he could sometimes oppose her, which would tend to set up a "double-bind" in the child leading to a schizoid personality.<sup>8</sup>

4. There is a fourth alternative, of course--the ideal role for the father--which is for him to support the mother in control training in which there are no punitive measures imposed for inducing control of the child during anality.

## 2. FATHER ABSENCE DURING ANALITY

Studies of maternal deprivation have drawn attention to the crucial significance of mothering. Partial deprivation refers to those children who, after establishing a satisfactory emotional relationship with the mother for the first six months of life, are thereafter frustrated by being separated from her. This is

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<sup>7</sup>Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, p. 99.

<sup>8</sup>Gregory Bateson, D. D. Jackson, J. Haley and J. H. Weakland, "A Note on the Double-Bind--1962," Family Process, II (1960).

reported to lead to a condition which Spitz<sup>9</sup> called "anaclitic depression." This is a rare phenomenon occurring only in the first year of an infant's life. In total deprivation, however, the infant never has any emotional ties with a mother figure at all. An illness called "marasmus" results from total deprivation. This has also been called "hospitalism" because in cases of foundlings who were hospitalized and denied tactile contact with any human being, male or female, suffered a dramatic wasting away. When these cases were described and reported, many and diverse studies on maternal deprivation both here and abroad resulted.

Recently there have been sobering second thoughts about the findings of these studies, however, When critically examined, the studies reveal many methodological weaknesses, such as inadequacies of design, uncontrolled factors, lack of precise measurements, failure to report crucial data, and other errors which tend to render the conclusions suspect.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Rene Z. Spitz, "Hospitalism," in Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, II (1946), 113-117. See also, Margaret A. Ribble, The Rights of Infants (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).

<sup>10</sup> N. O'Connor and C. Franks, "Childhood Upbringing and Other Environmental Factors," H. J. Eysenck (ed.) Handbook of Abnormal Psychology (New York: Basic Books, 1961), pp. 393-416.

"Hospitalism" is found rarely today in institutions that care for infants. Cases of maternal deprivation are still found, however, to occur outside of hospitals and institutions. Despite the negative criticism as to methodology found in the earlier studies, it can not be denied that gross neglect or prolonged institutionalization seemingly does have a pernicious effect.

Interestingly, in none of these studies dealing with maternal deprivation is the father ever mentioned as having even an indirect effect upon the child. For instance, a recent study by Patton and Gardner<sup>11</sup> describing five cases of growth failure due to maternal deprivation reveal these facts about the father in the family histories.

Case I. Girl, 15 months. "The father was described as an 'inadequate person' who worked only sporadically and was an alcoholic. He disclaimed the patient as his own child." (p. 17.)

Case II. Boy, 3 years. "The father worked only occasionally, away from home a great deal, and was said to have had several extra-marital affairs." (p. 55.)

Case III. Girl, 13 1/2 months. "The whereabouts of the father, age 42, were unknown. He had

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<sup>11</sup>Robert G. Patton and Lytt I. Gardner, Growth Failure in Maternal Deprivation (Springfield, Ill: Thomas, 1963).

recently been released from prison, and had a record of 59 arrests." (p. 61.)

Case IV. Boy, 3 and 1/2 years. "The father had worked only occasionally, and living conditions for the family had always been inadequate and temporary. There were frequent violent disagreements between the parents and the father was away from the home much of the time. . . . At the time of this admission, the parents were separated." (p. 67.)

Case V. Girl, 22 months. "The mother, 24, was well, and was separated from the father, entirely supported by welfare assistance." (p. 71.)

Citing the facts from the above study does not infer a direct relationship between the father's absence and growth failure in the infants described as a result of maternal deprivation. Father absence is perhaps only the result of an already impaired relationship between husband and wife, symptomatic of psychic damage manifested in the children who were hospitalized because they "failed to thrive" at home. This study was specifically chosen for mention here because the ages of the children at the time of hospitalization approximates the age of anality. It was chosen because father was "absent" in every case.

Growth failure due to maternal deprivation is not nearly as frequent as in the past. Five cases represent too small a sample from which to make generalizations. It is significant, however, that the authors make no mention of the fathers and their possible

contribution to the mother's or the children's emotional states.

### Conclusion

Scientific studies related directly to the absent father at each of the psychosexual stages are scarce. A careful search throughout the literature relative to the anal stage revealed no studies that would be helpful or shed any light on the influence a father's absence might have upon the child. The author concludes, therefore, due to lack of contrary evidence, that father absence during the anal stage, in which the developing child is habit (toilet) trained, is likely to have an indirect effect on the child as it does in the pre-natal and oral stages. In other words, father is absent, and his absence is felt indirectly by the child in the manner by which the mother responds to the father's absence. Tensions experienced by the mother in reaction to her husband's absence may produce either a punitive type of training problem for the child, or she may vacillate between passive or punitive training. Inconsistent training methods set up a "double-bind" situation for the child which, if it does not produce schizophrenia or a schizoid personality, causes the child to become so confused that he loses

confidence in his ability to interpret experience.<sup>12,13</sup>

### 3. THE ORIGIN OF GUILT

According to psychoanalytic theory the feeling of anxiety specifically identified as "guilt" first occurs when the Oedipal situation has been resolved and the superego (conscience) appears.<sup>14</sup> A feeling similar to guilt is experienced prior to the phallic stage, however. Consequently, a brief discussion of the origin of guilt is appropriately placed at the end of the chapter on anality. Guilt which is experienced following the resolution of the Oedipal conflict will be discussed in the next chapter.

Erikson sees shame as preceding guilt.<sup>15</sup> Hilgard claims that the child is able to experience guilt only when he is able to experience self-evaluation. For him,

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<sup>12</sup> Gregory Bateson, D. D. Jackson, J. Haley and J. Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," Journal of Consulting Psychology, I (1956), 251-264.

<sup>13</sup> Jerome D. Frank, Persuasion and Healing (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 225.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 251.



the presence of guilt feelings indicates that the child considers himself responsible for what he does. If one fails to do that which he considers worthy or right, he develops self-reproof in the form of guilt.<sup>16</sup> Self-evaluation and self-reproof are likely to begin during anality. According to Wise<sup>17</sup> guilt often arises at the stage of weaning or toilet training. The child is made to feel that his customary behavior is wrong. "Severity in toilet training may make the child feel guilt about his body and bodily functions. This guilt may later be related to the sexual organs."<sup>18</sup>

#### Guilt and Father Absence

Even before children have reached the age when they first experience guilt they often blame themselves for their father's absence. "To the child under five his parents are nothing less than Greek gods. If mother or father disappears, perhaps he was bad; he must have displeased them."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>E. R. Hilgard, "Human Motives and the Concept of Self," American Psychologist, IV (1949), 374-382.

<sup>17</sup>Carrol A. Wise, Psychiatry and the Bible (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 67-68.

<sup>19</sup>Jim and Janet Egleson, Parents Without Partners (New York: Ace Books, 1961), p. 140.

Often the mother feels guilty over the husband's leaving. "Some mothers may feel that the husband has left because of some fault of her own such as her not showing him enough love or understanding him."<sup>20</sup> This guilty feeling may undermine her capacity to deal consistently with her children in her training of them. Inconsistent training by the mother is not confined to the anal period, of course. It is likely, however, that inconsistent training during anality does greater harm to the child than at any other period of the child's life, for it is during this stage that the most dramatic and critical training of the child's behavior takes place.

Mother and children are not the only members to experience guilt when a "broken family" occurs. Guilt is often experienced by the absent father as well. Guilt experienced by all members of the family as it concerns the individual in relationship to the church and society in general will be placed in Chapters X and XI of this study.

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<sup>20</sup> Samuel H. Lerner, "Effects of Desertion on Family Life," Social Casework, XXXV (1954), 3-8.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PHALLIC STAGE

#### 1. FATHER PRESENCE DURING THE PHALLIC STAGE

Mother is the child's first object of love and of identification. He receives her individual attention in infancy. Benedek<sup>1</sup> sees mother and child as a symbiotic unit, as a continuation of the symbiosis which existed during gestation. According to her, the normal interaction between mother and child is reciprocal and self-propagating. The infant "feeds back" to the mother emotional gratification what he receives from her in care, thereby increasing her effectiveness as a mother.

As the child grows older, however, and can function more independently, he is expected to relinquish his exclusive claim upon mother and share her affection with father. The child finds this difficult to accept and, according to psychoanalytic theory, the boy begins to see father as an obstacle in fulfilling his desire to "be" with mother.

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<sup>1</sup>Therese Benedek, "The Psychosomatic Implications of the Primary Unit: Mother-Child" American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XIX (1949), 642.

### The Oedipal Conflict

The resentment and hostility the child experiences toward his father develops into the Oedipal conflict, which is produced by the young boy's love for his mother and jealousy for his father, and vice versa for the little girl.

Much has been written about the Oedipus Complex and its feminine counterpart, the Electra Complex. There is an excellent review of the psychoanalytic theory of the Oedipal situation by Mullahy.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, only a brief description will be given here.

In the Oedipal triangle (father, mother and child) the boy has become resentful and hostile toward the father, while at the same time he admires, loves and in part identifies with him. These opposing impulses make for ambivalent feelings and create additional conflict in the child which is heightened by feelings of guilt over his hostility and fear of possible retaliation by the father. For the girl, mother is the obstacle who stands between the girl and the father.

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<sup>2</sup>Patrick Mullahy, Oedipus Myth and Complex (New York: Grove Press, 1948).

a. Resolution of the Oedipal Conflict: The Oedipal conflict is resolved for the boy when he begins to accept his role in the family group and realizes that his father is the authority figure whose functions he cannot take over, but with whom he can identify and whose masculine behavior he can emulate. A successful resolution of the conflict makes the boy more independent of his mother, which in turn enables him to develop normally and later transfer his love for her to other female figures.<sup>3</sup> The little girl learns to identify with her mother, but with her there is less drive for her to overcome the conflict as abruptly as does the boy. The Oedipal situation remains in effect with the girl for longer periods and is continued more or less indefinitely.<sup>4</sup>

b. Is There An Oedipus Complex? Some anthropological studies argue that the Oedipus complex does not exist in some cultures. Malinowski,<sup>5</sup> for instance, who investigated the Trobrian Islanders, found a family

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<sup>3</sup>Everett S. Ostrovsky, Father to the Child (New York: Butnam's Sons, 1959), p. 143.

<sup>4</sup>Robert I. Watson, The Great Psychologists (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963), p. 452.

<sup>5</sup>B. Malinowski, Sex and Repression in Savage Society (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927).

organization which is quite different from our own. Fatherhood among the Trobrianders is a purely social relationship. Authority and discipline are vested in the mother's oldest brother who is the model for the child to follow. He, not the father, is the source of pride and social ambition, wealth, and social status which comes to the boy. Malinowski found that hostility is directed against the uncle and not against the father.

On the other hand, in our culture the studies of Blum and Friedman conclude that their findings agree with psychoanalytic theory. Blum<sup>6</sup> found that there was greater retention of the pre-Oedipal components in girls than in boys. Friedman<sup>7</sup> found positive attitudes toward the cross-sex parent and negative attitudes toward the same sex parent. Non-psychoanalytically oriented clinical workers report excessive attachment to opposite-sex parents and excessive hostility to same-sex parents.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>G. S. Blum, "A Study of the Psychoanalytic Theory of Psychosexual Development," Genetic Psychological Monograph, XXXIX (1949), 3-99.

<sup>7</sup>S. M. Friedman, "An Empirical Study of Castration and Oedipus Complexes," Genetic Psychological Monograph, XLII (1952), 61-130.

<sup>8</sup>Edward A. Strecker, Their Mother's Sons (New York: Lippincott, 1946).

Although there is scientific evidence to support the theory, controlled research has not been found which shows that the Oedipus situation always works through the steps ascribed to it, nor does research show that all boys and girls follow the particular patterns ascribed to its course.<sup>9</sup> Honigmann concluded after a study of anthropological evidence, that hostility toward the father and rivalry for the affection of the mother does exist in some, ours particularly, but not in all societies.<sup>10</sup>

It is not the purpose of this study to become involved in the controversy over the universality of the Oedipal complex. Whether or not the Oedipus complex exists in other cultures is not at issue here. There is sufficient clinical and scientific evidence to convince the author that an Oedipus complex or something resembling it, if not identical with it, does exist in our society. It is unlikely that the Oedipus complex is a universal phenomenon, but a conflict between a same sex parent and child intensified by positive feelings between a cross sex parent and child generally does occur in our culture during the phallic stage and again during puberty.

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<sup>9</sup> Robert I. Watson, Psychology and the Child (New York: Wiley, 1965), p. 461.

<sup>10</sup> J. J. Honigmann, Culture and Personality (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954).

c. Intensifications of Sexual Temptations: If sexual frustration is experienced by either of the parents, the Oedipal attraction is likely to be intensified in the child of the opposite sex. For instance, Fenichel says:

Very often the mother loves the son and the father loves the daughter. The parent's unconscious sexual love for their children is greater when their real sexual satisfaction, due to external circumstances or to their own neurosis, is insufficient. This love is felt by the children unconsciously as a sexual temptation, increasing their Oedipal complex.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, the most satisfactory role for the father to play, particularly at this stage of development, is that of a warm, loving and accepting husband to his wife, gratifying his own sexual needs with her and also satisfying her sexual needs. Subtle sexual temptations are not as keenly experienced by the child with the parent of the opposite sex, and the triangle is resolved more easily. Father also needs to relate warmly (but not seductively) with the daughter to awaken her to the opposite sex.

The absence of the father as a sex partner for the mother could increase her desire to relate to the son more strongly than to the daughter.<sup>12</sup> It is also possible

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<sup>11</sup>Otto Fenichel, The Psycholanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York: Norton, 1945), p. 93.

<sup>12</sup>See page 32 for a discussion of mothers who use



for her to relate strongly to a daughter in the absence of male children. Ambivalent feelings toward the mother are likely to be experienced by the children when an absent father occurs. This will be explained in the following section.

## 2. FATHER ABSENCE DURING THE PHALLIC STAGE

The absence of the father in the home is a situational factor which has an effect on the aggressive behavior of a child. Aggressiveness in our culture is considered a masculine quality. Consequently, if the father is absent the child who would suffer most from his absence would be the boy. This is measured by the amount of aggressive behavior the boy displays. Two important studies tested this hypothesis during the Second World War. The Sears<sup>13</sup> study involved preschool-age children. The Bach<sup>14</sup> study concerned school-age

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their children as a partial substitute for their husbands who are absent.

<sup>13</sup> R. R. Sears, Margaret H. Pintler and Pauline S. Sears, "Effect of Father Separation on Preschool Children's Doll-Play Aggression," Child Development, XVII (1946), 219-243.

<sup>14</sup> G. R. Bach, "Father-fantasies and Father-typing in Father-separated Children," Child Development, XVII (1946), 63-80.

children. Both studies used substantially similar procedures, with data being collected through doll play. Both studies found similar results. The Sears study will be discussed here as it covers father absence during the phallic stage.

As would be expected, the Sears study found that father's absence had little observable effect on the amount of aggression shown by the girls. Boys from father-present homes demonstrated much more aggression in general than did boys from father-absent homes. The results are compatible with the interpretation that father serves as an aggressive model for the boy. Boys from father-absent homes lacked this model and hence were less aggressive.

A recent study by Hetherington<sup>15</sup> found that if father left home sometime before the age of six, considerable disruption was found in sex-type behaviors such as avoidance of appropriate masculine behavior, competition and aggressive play. She found that if father left after the age of five there was little difference between father-absent and father-present children. She maintains that if masculine identification is made by

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<sup>15</sup>E. Mavis Hetherington, "Effects of Paternal Absence on Sex-typed Behaviors in Negro and White Pre-adolescent Males," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, IV:1 (1966), 87-91.

the age of six it is maintained by the child if the father leaves the home after that age.

A more recent study by Anderson<sup>16</sup> found that the presence of the boy's father is crucial in the years following the age of four, particularly during early adolescence.

Comparing these two studies it is found that the Hetherington study used subjects (32 Negro and 32 White first-born boys between the ages of 9 and 12) sixteen of whom were from homes in which both parents were present, and sixteen from homes in which the father was absent. They were measured for dependence and independence, aggression and physical competition.

The Anderson study used subjects (59 Negro and 50 White boys between the ages of 15 and 18) who were institutionalized for the treatment of juvenile offenders. Findings were based on retrospective analysis of longitudinal data.

The Hetherington study selected subjects who were attending a recreation center in a lower-class urban area. The Anderson study selected random subjects who

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<sup>16</sup> Robert E. Anderson, "National Institute of Mental Health Study Highlights Father Role on Son Growth," Pediatric News, I:6 (1967). Paper given before the American Psychiatric Association, May, 1967.

were from the Northeastern Middle Atlantic, Southeastern, North and South Central States and the District of Columbia prior to institutionalization. The Anderson subjects were, for the most part, from the same economic class as the Hetherington subjects. The Anderson study indicates a wider demographic selection of subjects, whereas the Hetherington study selected subjects from a confined ghetto-like area. Therefore greater heterogeneity of subjects is evidenced in the Anderson study.

Insofar as much research is hypothesis oriented, neither of these studies explicitly states an hypothesis. The one disadvantage of the Anderson study is that it is based on a retrospective analysis in which there is always the possibility of a built-in bias. This study tends to minimize the bias-effect by a random selection of cases, the use of "hard" data of presence and absence of mother and father, and the study of a comparable group of control cases. Beyond these minor criticisms there is little that the author can fault either of these studies methodologically speaking.

The Hetherington study suffers in comparison with the Anderson study insofar as it did not include subjects beyond the age of twelve. This is unfortunate because as the Anderson study shows father absence after the age of six does have a significant bearing on

adolescent acting out. The Hetherington study simply does not take this age group into consideration. This does not mean, however, that the Hetherington conclusion that masculine identification made before the ages of four and six is more important than masculine identification after that age. It is merely a matter of degree. In fact, both studies are helpful to the main thesis in regard to masculine identification. For instance, the Anderson study is helpful in pointing out the importance of a masculine model (father or father substitute) after the age of six and again during puberty in preventing the development of delinquent tendencies.<sup>17</sup> The Hetherington study is helpful in indicating that the boy's most critical male identification period is prior to the age of six.

#### Father Substitute or Fantasy-Father

According to Prugh,<sup>18</sup> "the concept of death, until the ninth or tenth year, appears to involve 'going away' or separation."

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<sup>17</sup>The Anderson study will be discussed again in the chapter dealing with delinquency.

<sup>18</sup>Dane G. Prugh, "The Preschool Child," in Harold C. Stuart and Dane G. Prugh (eds.) The Healthy Child (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 269.

Freud and Burlingham<sup>19</sup> found in their studies of father absent children that the children were unable to accept the fact of their father's death although it seemed comparatively easy for them to accept the separation from their fathers due to evacuation from bomb-torn London, or because their fathers were overseas. They say:

All our orphaned children talk about their dead fathers as if they were alive or, when they have grasped the fact of death, try to deny it in the form of phantasies about re-birth or return from heaven. In some cases this happens under the direct influence of mothers who hide the truth from the child to spare it pain; in other cases phantasies of the identical nature are the child's spontaneous production.<sup>20</sup>

And in another place:

When the child was three years old, his "father" was the image of a person whom he could love and admire, and show off proudly to other people. At four and one-half the phantasy-father definitely took over the role of the boy's conscience which had developed in the meantime.<sup>21</sup>

What they seem to assert is that in the absence of a father or a father-substitute, the child will create one. Their mention of a conscience having developed would be consistent with the orthodox Freudian view that

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<sup>19</sup> Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham, Infants Without Families (New York: International University Press, 1944), p. 107.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

with the resolution of the Oedipal situation the conscience (super-ego) is formed. This view is supported by the Anderson study which found that a father's presence during the post-Oedipal development is crucial in the development of adequate internal controls over behavior.

According to the Bach<sup>22</sup> study father-separated children produce an idealistic and feminine fantasy picture of the father when compared with a control group of father-home children which may lead to a disruption of sex-type behaviors. This view is supported in the Hetherington study, at least for the first four years.

Phantomizing of the father can lead to serious complications. For instance, when the father is separated during the time when the father-absent child creates a stereotyped, idealistic fantasy picture of the absent father, it may initially be a handicap in the re-establishment of a realistic father-child relationship when the father returns after a prolonged absence. "The child may experience a certain degree of disappointment over the wished-for reunion."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Bach, op. cit.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 311.

The Stolz study reports a similar finding:

The first-born child in the war-separated family, according to the fathers and mothers' reports, was faced with adjustments to an unknown man who suddenly invaded his world, taking a dominant position in the family. He usurped the child's "mommy," assumed personal intimacies, made unexpected requirements for behavior, demanded obedience, and used methods not theretofore experienced by the child.<sup>24</sup>

Both the Stolz and Bach studies dealt with subjects who were war-separated from their fathers, but the following quotation from the Bach study may well be applied to families who are separated due to causes other than war, such as prolonged hospitalization, imprisonment, extended business trips, and the like.

The instigation of feelings of paternal rejection is a strong possibility. The father may be expected to be puzzled by this and may develop the impression that his child has become estranged from him. This may lead to some disturbance of the morale of the family group.<sup>25</sup>

Fantasy is a likely occurrence in the ideation of most people, especially in children. It seems to fulfill a need, particularly in children who experience parental rejection or absence. In the case of an absent father, the most salutary resolution of the father-absent

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<sup>24</sup>Lois Mead Stolz, "Father Relations of War-Born Children" (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 318.

<sup>25</sup>Bach, op. cit. See page 18 for a discussion of young families who experience father loss due to extended business trips.



problem is for the child to have a real father-substitute or surrogate in order to minimize the need to create an idealized and feminine fantasy picture which may lead to a disruption of sex-type behavior because proper masculine identification is not made. The evidence points to the conclusion that this need is greatest before the age of four, although other studies find that the period of masculine identification can and does go beyond the age of four.

#### The Oedipal Problem and Father Absence

When father absents himself (physically or psychically) or had died when the conflicts regarding him are in their active state, the child's whole psychosexual development may be affected. The boy may remain attached to the mother, fail to develop proper masculine concepts, and decline to accept the male role. Often sexual deviance may ensue.<sup>26</sup>

Leichty's study<sup>27</sup> shows that males separated from fathers by overseas duty show a higher frequency of

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<sup>26</sup> Ostrovsky, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>27</sup> Mary M. Leichty, "The Effect of Father-absence During Early Childhood Upon the Oedipal Situation as Reflected in Young Adults," Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, VI (1960), 212-217.

strong Oedipal intensity, and a lower frequency of close identification with the father.

The McCord, McCord and Thurber study<sup>28</sup> reveals that paternal absence during childhood is related to trends toward a feminine identification and that children manifest anxiety related to sex.

Most studies dealing with father absence assert that his absence is more critical for the boy than for the girl. It would, however, be a mistake to overlook father absence as it pertains to the girl.

In the Electra Complex father becomes the love-object for the girl, and mother the obstacle who stands between the girl and the father. The daughter whose father is absent has no opportunity to resolve the resulting conflict. She may, as a result, fail to develop her feminine role. "The danger of psychosexual misorientation may be as great for the female as for the male."<sup>29</sup>

This position regarding girls is supported by

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<sup>28</sup> Joan McCord, William McCord and Emily Thurber, "Some Effects of Paternal Absence on Male Children," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, LXIV:5 (1962), 361-369.

<sup>29</sup> Ostrovsky, op. cit., p. 147.

Leonard,<sup>30</sup> Forrest,<sup>31</sup> Peterson<sup>32</sup> and others. Leonard claims that the Oedipal relationship between father and daughter cannot develop normally if the father is non-participating in the family. Crucial to the girls' development is whether or not the father is available to her as a love-object.

### The Oedipal Conflict and Guilt

A Father's not coming home means to the young child that the father does not love him. The boy especially has strong feelings of guilt because of his love for the mother and rivalry with the father.

Sometimes . . . a mother tells the son he is now the man in the family. This creates strong anxiety in the child because what has formerly been a fantasy approaches the proportions of reality. We see evidence of this clinically in the child's attempt to ward off his anxiety and guilt through fantasies of reuniting the mother with the father.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Marjorie R. Leonard, "Fathers and Daughters, the Significance of Fathering in the Psychosexual Development of the Girl," International Journal of Psychoanalysis, XLVIII:2-3 (1966), 325-334.

<sup>31</sup>Tess Forrest, "Paternal Roots of Female Character Development," Contemporary Psychoanalysis, III (1966), 21-28.

<sup>32</sup>Ruth J. Peterson, "Understanding the Reactions of Fatherless Families," in her The Significance of the Father (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1959).

<sup>33</sup>Samuel H. Lerner, "Effects of Desertion on Family Life," Social Casework, XXXV (1954), 3-8.

The son may unconsciously feel that the father's absence is a fulfilment of the Oedipal wish to get rid of the father so as to possess the mother. Thus, intense feelings of guilt are aroused when the father absents himself. The frustrated Oedipal love may create for the daughter an idealization of the absent father. Children of both sexes are likely to experience an increased attachment to the mother which is highly ambivalent in nature.<sup>34</sup>

#### Summary of Conclusions

The following conclusions are made on the basis of many studies (most of which are mentioned in this chapter) which support the hypothesis that father-absent homes produce boys who identify with the feminine role:

1. A father's presence is likely to reinforce the "father-like role" as appropriate for a boy in our culture to adopt.
2. The absence of a father to support the son in appropriate masculine behavior may cause the boy to retreat more readily to the role mother uses.
3. Nursery school and the first grades in primary school are usually taught by women, which tend to

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<sup>34</sup>Peterson, op. cit. p. 50.

reinforce the use of the feminine mother role.

Scientific studies dealing with the Oedipal conflict find that father absence is considered more critical at this stage of psychosexual development than at any other. A child's sex-role identification is made during this time-span, and the father or a father substitute is a necessary factor in the resolution of the parent-child triangle. Therefore, the following conclusions are summarized:

1. The absence of a father at this stage is likely to impede a successful resolution of the Oedipal conflict.

2. An unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipal conflict creates anxiety related to sex-type behavior.

3. Father is considered so essential to the healthy development of the child during the Oedipal stage that a father figure is created in fantasy if he or a father substitute does not exist in reality.

4. An idealistic fantasy picture of the absent father may be a handicap in the re-establishment of a realistic father-child relationship when the father returns after a prolonged absence.

5. A father-husband's absence may create in the mother sexual frustration which may be subtly transferred to the children, particularly the boy, which

intensifies the Oedipal complex.

6. Feminine identification in boys, caused by the absent father in any one of the above possibilities, may be a factor which causes many boys to over-compensate with exaggerated masculine behavior when they reach the next psychosexual stage.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LATENCY STAGE

According to psychoanalytic theory, the latency period is supposed to be a period of relative quiescence with a reduction of sexual interests. Originally, it was thought that sexual impulses remained latent following the resolution of the Oedipal situation by the repression of sexual interests, accounting for the name the period bears. Furthermore, in the past, this period was considered of less importance in the development of personality than the earlier stages and the later stage of adolescence. Consequently, there has been a relative neglect of these years by orthodox psychoanalytic investigators. Few articles have appeared concerned with latency and its effects. For instance, Monroe,<sup>1</sup> in an authoritative account of psychoanalytic schools of thought, devotes less than two pages to the latency period out of the 330 which she devoted to Freud. According to the index, no other direct reference to latency is made anywhere in the volume.

It is now recognized that during the years of

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth L. Monroe, Schools of Psychoanalytic Thought (New York: Dryden, 1955).

latency there is no true recession of sex impulses. Sexual interests are quiescent and to some extent dormant but by no means nonexistent.<sup>2</sup>

The psychoanalytic description of the latency period is undoubtedly an accurate description of the public sex behavior of the latency-age child in our culture. As will be seen in the following pages, there is disagreement among the various observers as to when specific behavior patterns occur. Throughout this chapter it is well to keep in mind that an active sex life in the latency-age child is still present, and that the repression or suppression of sexual interests is likely to be due primarily to social pressures present in major segments of our society.

The latency period is not a universal phenomenon. Malinowski<sup>3</sup> in his study of the Trobriand Islanders has described a society in which genital sexuality continues during the so-called latency period.

Cultural determinants of the presence or absence of the latency period seem evident. In our culture,

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<sup>2</sup>Robert I. Watson, Psychology of the Child (New York: Wiley, 1965), p. 587.

<sup>3</sup>B. Malinowski, "Prenuptial Intercourse Between the Sexes in the Trobriand Island, N. W. Melanesia," Psychoanalytic Review, XIV (1927), 26-36 (cited in Watson, op. cit.).



emphasis is on a suppression of the specifically sexual aspect of masculine and feminine behavior. Sullivan<sup>4</sup> emphasizes cooperation and competition as part of the normal development in what he calls the juvenile period. This comes about because the child has now reached the age when he can view his peers with some objectivity and thus is able to develop these tools of social living. It is an age when children try out their abilities and gain or fail to acquire self-confidence and self-reliance. Erikson echoes the cooperation aspect of this age by saying, "This is socially a most decisive stage: since industry involves doing things beside and with others."<sup>5</sup>

Benjamin Spock has called this period of a child's development the "middle aged child." The term "school age child" has also been used.

As expressed earlier, the author supports the view that sex-drives are suppressed during this age because of social pressure. He agrees with psychoanalytic theory, however, that ego strengths do emerge, and as these ego strengths develop, the child gradually learns through an interactional process occurring between

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<sup>4</sup>Harry S. Sullivan, Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry (New York: Norton, 1940).

<sup>5</sup>Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International University Press, 1959), p. 88.

himself and others, to integrate and modify his blind impulses with the inhibiting demands of his external world. In other words, the latency-age child learns to modify primitive urges into socially acceptable patterns of behavior. The child is more easily trained to adopt the accepted "codes of behavior" of his same-sexed peer group and same-sexed authority figures whom he admires.

Bornstein<sup>6</sup> says that during the phase from six to eight or nine years "bits of exceedingly mature behavior often alternate with babyish mannerisms or demanding behavior," and by the age of eight or nine, the more mature trends become more fully consolidated.

According to Anderson when the child enters the fourth grade he begins a period of relative calm and stability. "Some writers class this three year period the middle childhood plateau of slow, steady growth while others refer to it as the age of reason."<sup>7</sup>

Fritz Redl<sup>8</sup> speaks of this later period (between

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<sup>6</sup> B. Bornstein, "On Latency," in Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, VI (1951), 279.

<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Anderson, "The Elementary School Period," in Harold C. Stewart and Dane G. Prugh (eds.), The Healthy Child (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 402.

<sup>8</sup> Fritz Redl, "Pre-adolescents--What Makes Them Tick," Child Study, XXI (1944), 44-59.

nine and thirteen) as a time when no visible change has taken place in their sex development, but he describes the "pre-adolescent" as a phase in which "the nicest children behave in the most awful way." Rather than the period of "relative calm and stability" which Anderson and some other writers describe, Redl claims that during pre-adolescence the well-knit pattern of a child's personality is broken up or loosened, which becomes a "developmental phase not of improvement but disorganization; not a permanent disorganization, but one for future growth." Furthermore, this "breaking-up-of-the-child-personality" period, is a time when old, long-forgotten or repressed impulses of childhood come to the surface for awhile, before they are discarded for good. According to Redl, this would explain in the child's return to infantile habits, nervous tics; silly antics; irritating behavior; recurring naughty habits which other writers describe as occurring primarily during the first phase of latency.

Although investigators of the latency period differ as to when these pre-adolescent antics occur, most of these writers agree that it is a time when these youngsters establish strong identification with a group of their same-sexed peers. The child commences to turn his thoughts away from the family group and toward the

outer world. He begins to learn that in his group experience he must conform to what is expected of him, both in school and in the community. He finds it is not acceptable to be different. He wants to be like his peers in action and dress. He begins to question the knowledge and authority of parents, who, in the past, he considered all-knowing and all-powerful. The teacher begins to take an important place in his esteem.<sup>9</sup>

Noyes and Kolb make the following observation, which leads us to a discussion of the father role now that a discussion of what the child is like during this period of latency has been made:

While sex interests and activities do not disappear, there are no such marked and significant psycho-sexual changes as are seen in both the preceding and following periods. The child does, however, identify more strongly than before with the parent of the same sex and begins more differentiation along masculine and feminine lines. Therefore, at this time it is important that there be close association with a parent of the same sex with whom the child may identify in establishing masculinity or femininity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Elizabeth P. Rice, "Social Development of Children," in Stewart and Prugh, op. cit., p. 361.

<sup>10</sup>Arthur P. Noyes and Lawrence C. Kolb, Modern Clinical Psychiatry (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1966), p. 28.

## 1. FATHER'S PRESENCE DURING LATENCY

Although it is important that the child have a close association with the parent of the same sex, Prugh suggests that even when the same-sexed parent is present the same-sexed teacher often becomes a substitute parent. He feels that parents should recognize this phenomenon and wisely support and reinforce it. He warns that "certain less secure parents may feel threatened by the fact that the child shows enthusiasm for a person outside the family."<sup>11</sup> Prugh further points out that because the child during latency displays many new skills and accomplishments that the temptation for parents is to take all of these interests at face value and to feel worried about the child's lack of responsibility if he abandons a project shortly after he so enthusiastically begins it.

Certain parents also find themselves trapped by their own unrealized wishes for achievement . . . [and] . . . give their children what they themselves could not have. As a result, their unconscious encouragement of the school age child's multitudinous interests may lead to such a tightly scheduled set of activities that the child becomes over-tense, fatigued, or loses interest in one or many activities.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Robert H. Anderson, "The School Age Child," in Stewart and Prugh, op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

Robert Bell says that "the father who 'gives' Saturday morning to his son may really be 'taking' the son from something he would rather be doing."<sup>13</sup> This is a temptation for many fathers who feel that they spend so little time with their sons during the week that they must make their weekend relationship one of helping him to become the "real boy" according to the father's definition, hence the "little league syndrome" which afflicts so many fathers when their sons reach this age.

According to Bell the father's control over the daughter tends to be less direct and he concentrates more on the pleasurable aspect of the relationship than on the responsibility in her rearing.

Though the father assumes that the mother can take care of the son in the everyday requirements of child-rearing, he also believes that he should move in and give the son the masculine direction he needs.<sup>14</sup>

### Discussion

The comments reported in this study by students of this particular age period are impressions based on clinical observations and little that would suggest

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<sup>13</sup>Robert R. Bell, Marriage and Family Interaction (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1963), p. 352.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

scientific investigation. These observations are undoubtedly true descriptions of the latency child, but they lack scientific exactness. There are few, if any, scientific studies of the behavior of these children. The differing descriptions of the pre-adolescent is due to the very nature of the period. Peer groups differ, and social pressures vary. This may account in some measure for the differing observations reported by these various writers.

From the observations reported in this work regarding this period of development, two separate phases emerge: the first phase occurring about the age of six through eight, and the second phase from about nine through twelve. Further investigation is needed to test this hypothesis, however.

Furthermore, the latency period tends to be both a period of calm and a period of disorganization. It is also one of cooperation and competition. It is a period in which the child disapproves of sexual interests, not only because he has suppressed them because of social pressure, but because there is a widening of his social horizon. The child's school and play interests absorb him in the world of his contemporaries. With this widening, sexual interests may assume less importance simply because his scope of interest has widened.

## 2. FATHER ABSENCE DURING LATENCY

Bornstein says that "the school age child, in spite of his long step forward, is not a 'little man': he still needs understanding and firm guidance."<sup>15</sup> The firm guidance aspect is supported by the Anderson study which found that father absence immediately following the Oedipal stage creates a more significant possibility of delinquent behavior during adolescence than his absence at any other age.<sup>16</sup> Presumably, the understanding and firm guidance referred to by Bornstein is more readily accepted by the child from the adult of the same sex.

As was noted earlier, the Bach study<sup>17</sup> found that the father fantasies of father-absent boys were more similar to those of girls than were the fantasies of father present boys.

The McCord, et. al. study<sup>18</sup> found that boys with

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<sup>15</sup> Bornstein, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Robert E. Anderson, National Institute of Mental Health Study Highlights, "Father Role in Son Growth," Pediatric News I:6 (1967).

<sup>17</sup> George R. Bach, "Father-fantasies in Father-separated Children," Child Development, XVII (1946), 63-80.

<sup>18</sup> Joan McCord, William McCord and Emily Thurber, "Some Effects of Paternal Absence on Male Children," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, XLVIII (1953), 185-189.



absent fathers between the ages of six and twelve showed feminine-aggressive behavior.

The Sears, Pintler and Sears study found that father absent boys tend to react to their feminine identification with exaggerated masculinity.<sup>19</sup>

The later Lynn and Sawrey study<sup>20</sup> of eight to nine and one-half year old Norwegian boys (with sailor fathers who were absent for extended periods of time) likewise found considerable compensatory masculine behavior and insecure father identification. The Leichty study,<sup>21</sup> cited earlier, supports this same finding.

Another behavior pattern may emerge at this time which manifests itself in a passive manner rather than the aggressively masculine behavior noted in the above studies. Charles Shaw says that a feminine, passive-dependent orientation frequently occurs in boys who have

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<sup>19</sup>R. R. Sears, M. H. Pintler and P. S. Sears, "The Effect of Father Separation on Preschool Children's Doll-Play Aggression," Child Development, XVII (1946), 219-243.

<sup>20</sup>D. Lynn and W. L. Sawrey, "The Effects of Father Absence on Norwegian Boys and Girls," Journal of Abnormal Psychology, IXIV (1962), 361-369.

<sup>21</sup>Mary M. Leichty, "The Effect of Father-absence During Early Childhood Upon the Oedipal Situation as Reflected in Young Adults," Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, VI (1960), 212-217.

no father, or if the father is himself a passive ineffectual and unmasculine person.

Such a boy has low self-esteem, is afraid of aggression, does not get along well with his peers and often prefers the company of younger children. He may become overtly homosexual.<sup>22</sup>

Sullivan, speaking of the pre-adolescent in regard to affectional rapport, says that it occurs under circumstances of security with another person of the same sex.<sup>23</sup>

### Discussion

Although psychoanalytic theory minimizes the sex drive during this period, the studies cited in the father-absent portion of this chapter show that considerable sex-type activity takes place, but it is kept under the surface.

More important to this study, however, is the fact that father absence is most critical for the child during this period. As the studies indicated the absence of a father (physical or psychic) has a greater impact upon the boy than on the girl. All studies found that father absence tends to create feminine identification

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<sup>22</sup>Charles R. Shaw, The Psychiatric Disorder of Children (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1966), p.131.

<sup>23</sup>Sullivan, op. cit. p. 42.

due to insecure father identification. Many of the boys react to this feminine, passive-dependent orientation with compensatory masculine behavior. This is in keeping with the general observation that sex tendencies are found to be more related to behavior shown by one's peers than was the case when he was younger. The latency child is subject to conforming to the norms of his same-sexed peer group.

Finding that feminine behavior is inappropriate if the boy is to conform to the exaggerated maleness of his same-sex peer group, he finds that he must conform or disguise his traits of femininity. So pronounced is this exaggerated maleness during this period that the boy will have nothing to do with girls.

### Conclusion

Due to the paucity of studies related to this period many questions arise which need scientific validation. Consequently, the following conclusions will be stated as operational hypotheses for further investigation:

#### Hypothesis #1,

There are two distinct phases occurring during the latency stage: the first phase occurring about the age of six through eight, and the second phase from about nine through twelve.

### Hypothesis #2,

Father-absent boys during the age of latency tend to develop a reaction formation to cover the tendency to identify with a feminine role because it is in conflict with cultural standards of his peer group.

Because father absence during this period intensifies the need to conform to his same-sexed peer group norms,

### Hypothesis #3,

Tendencies toward homosexuality are intensified during latency, although not necessarily overt.

### Hypothesis #4,

"Bullying" behavior in some boys is caused by  
1) a projection of homosexual longing and/or by  
2) an overcompensatory defence against feminine, passive-dependent orientation.

In the opinion of the author, the latency period is much more critical in the development of a child than it is given by orthodox Freudian theorists. However, even though the boy suffers more than the girl over the loss of the father at this stage, the boy readily adopts a father-substitute. Consequently, there is less danger for the boy who suffers father loss if an adequate father-substitute is found for him.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PUBERTY STAGE

The onset of adolescence begins with puberty. How long it lasts will not be discussed here. Other than the rapid physiological development of the sex organs, with the maturation of reproductive capacities and heterosexual interests, the growing adolescent is primarily concerned with what he appears to be in the eyes of others as compared with how he perceives himself. He is in search of a personal identity, a sense of self.<sup>1</sup> He vacillates between personal independence and a continuing dependence upon his parents. The sexual problems of the unmarried youth compounds the problem of identity and the search for meaningful heterosexual relationships.<sup>2</sup> They are adults biologically years before our social custom or the law recognizes them to be adults. Teenage and twenty year old males have reached their maximum sexual capacity in which they reach orgasm more frequently than older males.

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<sup>1</sup>Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International University Press, 1959), pp. 88-94.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred C. Kinsey, et. al., Sexual Behavior in The Human Female (New York: Saunders, 1953), pp. 13-21.

That is why, according to Kinsey, so many of our American youth, both males and females, depend upon masturbation instead of coitus as a pre-marital outlet. Restraints on pre-marital heterosexual contacts appear to be primary factors in the development of homosexual activities among both females and males.<sup>3</sup> The law specifies the right of married adults to have regular intercourse, but it makes no provision whatsoever for the 40% of our population which is sexually mature but unmarried. Many youths and older males and females are disturbed because the only sources of sexual outlet available to them are either legally or socially disapproved.

#### 1. FATHER'S PRESENCE DURING ADOLESCENCE

An interesting study of the initiatory rites of teenagers into adulthood in various cultures made by Whiting, Kluckhohn, and Anthony,<sup>4</sup> suggests that a society's behavior toward its adolescents is precisely the reverse of that toward its infants. In other words, if a particular society indulges their infants it is

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>John W. M. Whiting, Richard Kluckhohn and Albert Anthony, "The Function of Male Initiation Ceremonies at Puberty," in Eleanor E. Maccoby, Theodore M. Newcomb and Eugene L. Hartly (eds.) Readings in Social Psychology (New York: Holt, 1958).

strict toward their adolescents. According to their study, contemporary American society tends to "deprive" infants and indulge teenagers.

Although many American parents do indulge their children, particularly during adolescence, many of them plant a sense of shame, guilt, embarrassment, and fear toward sex as a result of their own anxiety over and subtle efforts to deny or prohibit sexuality.

A child acquires his own idea of how to be a good husband or wife, a good father or mother, from the society in which he lives, but more particularly through identification with his parents. He needs to experience the love of the parent of the opposite sex to provide the foundation for his feelings toward his future mate. He needs also to identify with the parent of the same sex in order to establish the basis for his own adult sex life. Therefore, the father is a model and an identity figure for his sons to relate to, and at the same time provides the foundation for his daughter's feelings and a pattern for her choice in a future mate.

Adolescence is a disturbing time for the child, for he stands midway between personal independence and continuing dependence on his parents. A re-occurrence of the Oedipal conflict takes place, but it is more complicated. When in adolescence the ego comes into

conflict with instinctual drives, the situation is different from what it was in childhood, Contradictory attitudes come to the fore. Side by side or following one another appear genital heterosexual impulses, all kinds of infantile sexual behavior, and attitudes of extreme asceticism, which not only try to suppress all sexuality but everything pleasant as well.

During the period of infantile sexuality and especially at the time of the suppression of the Oedipus complex, the child learned to consider sexual impulses as dangerous. In a society that treated sexuality differently puberty, too, would assume a different course.

As a matter of fact, in puberty sexual development seems to set in again just at the point at which it was abandoned at the time of the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Before the incestuous bindings are resolved, an intensifying of the strivings of the Oedipus complex regularly occurs.<sup>5</sup>

The oedipus conflict, when it occurs again in puberty, declines when nonincestuous authority figures take the place of parents. This is difficult for the whole family, particularly between the father and the son, because the son is again a rival with the father and at the same time must break away from incestuous impulses toward his mother. Heterosexual relationships outside the family are made difficult because the growing

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<sup>5</sup> Otto Fenichel, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York: Norton, 1945), p. 111.



adolescent is concerned with what he appears to be in the eyes of others. He is extremely self-conscious, and the boy needs his father's reassurance that he is a male, and the girl needs her father's assurance that she is a female.

The most helpful role for the father to take while his children are experiencing the turbulence of adolescence is for him to be a loving husband to his wife so that the same Oedipal attraction is not subtly intensified as was described earlier during the infantile Oedipal situation.

## 2. FATHER ABSENCE DURING PUBERTY

When the child enters adolescence he comes more under the control and influence of agencies outside the home.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, when a father's absence occurs during adolescence, the child has only one parent left from whom to emancipate himself. When this occurs, the wishes of the young for independence clashes with the need to be needed.<sup>7</sup> The child not only experiences the loss of the father, but his problem is further complicated

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<sup>6</sup>Robert R. Bell, Marriage and Family Interaction (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1963), p. 369.

<sup>7</sup>Willard Waller and Ruben Hill, The Family (New York: Holt, 1952), p. 430.

by the death or other cause of separation eliminating the need for father-child emancipation. He is confronted with the need to emancipate himself from mother in his search for identity and autonomy independent of parental influence. Mother's need for the child to help ease the pain of father's absence comes in conflict with the child's need to "break" with mother in order to establish sexual identification. "Letting go" of the child on the part of the mother becomes more difficult with the loss of the husband.

### Conclusion

Careful examination of the literature does not reveal any specific studies on the psychic damage the absence of a father may have when it occurs during adolescence. Many studies have been made regarding the problem of delinquency and adolescent acting out in which an absent father is a major contributing factor. Usually delinquent behavior occurs during adolescence, but father may have absented himself prior to this age.

According to the recent Anderson report<sup>8</sup> the differences between delinquent and non-delinquent boys

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<sup>8</sup>Robert E. Anderson, "National Institute of Mental Health Study Highlights," "Father Role in Son Growth," Pediatric News, 1:6 (1962).

becomes "highly significant" when the father's absence occurs after the boys are 12 years of age. This finding would support the psychoanalytic formulation of the crucial importance of the boy's father for the post-Oedipal development of adequate internal controls over behavior. The healthy resolution of the Oedipal conflict in adolescence is different than in the six year old. The absence of the father complicates the process at both stages, however.

In the six year old the healthy resolution of the Oedipal situation is accomplished when the boy accepts father as an authority figure. In his absence, however, the boy's whole psychosexual development may be affected.<sup>9</sup> So, too, in the adolescent. The healthy resolution of the re-occurring Oedipal problem is accomplished when the boy establishes heterosexual relationships outside the immediate family. In the absence of a father, however, the boy usually experiences difficulty in "breaking" with the mother because of her "need" of him as a husband substitute.

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<sup>9</sup>See the section on the Oedipal problem in Chapter V of this study. See also the section on delinquency in which this problem is again discussed.

Stephens<sup>10</sup> claims that if a father or father figure is absent from the home during the first six years, mothers tend to be more sexually attracted to their sons. Mothers are also more jealous of their son's girl friends when they have reached the dating age. During adolescence the mother has a similar difficulty in releasing the boy. The boy has difficulty in making heterosexual attachments outside the home. He is torn between a loyalty to his mother's need and his need to emancipate himself from her.

#### A Note

The following two chapters, which deal with male schizophrenia, and character disorders such as delinquency and suicide, are included in this study to point up the more severe consequences a father loss may have upon his offspring.

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<sup>10</sup> William N. Stephens, "Judgements by Social Workers on Boys and Mothers in Fatherless Families," Journal of Genetic Psychology, XCIX (1961), 59-64.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FATHER ABSENCE AND MALE SCHIZOPHRENICS

#### Father and Mother Absence Compared

An exploratory survey of patients institutionalized at Metropolitan State Hospital, Norwalk, California, was made during the months of June, July and August, 1967. Initially, the files of each patient on Ward #108 were carefully examined by the author in June. Family histories revealed that of the forty-three patients in Ward #108 no information was available regarding the parents of eight patients. Of the remaining thirty-five patients, the following table shows each patient's parental presence and absence prior to the age of fifteen:

TABLE I

(Ward #108, all males)

1. Mother loss . . . . .	2
2. Father loss . . . . .	9
3. Both parents absent . . . .	2
4. Divorce or separation . . .	8
5. Parents not absent . . . .	14
	<u>35</u>

Sixty percent of the patients had a parent or parents absent prior to reaching the age of fifteen. This finding was much higher than expected. The national

average for 1960 for children under the age of eighteen who had parents who were absent due to death, divorce or separated and other causes was .095% or a little less than 10%. In California, the average was .104% or a little more than 10%.<sup>1</sup> It must be pointed out, however, that the 10% figure is only for the year 1960. The likelihood of parental absence occurring over a period of fifteen years would increase the average, but it is less likely that the national average over this time-span would reach 60%.

In that Ward #108 was composed entirely of male patients, a survey of an all female ward (#107) was made.

TABLE II

(Ward #107, all females)

1. Mother loss . . . . .	1
2. Father loss . . . . .	4
3. Both Parents absent . .	1
4. Divorce and separation	7
5. Parents not absent . .	17
6. Unknown . . . . .	19
	<u>49</u>

Eliminating the nineteen "unknowns," forty-three and one-third percent of the patients had a parent or

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<sup>1</sup>Source: Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census U. S. Census of Population: 1960 PC (1) ID. Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1963, p. 73.

parents absent prior to reaching the age of fifteen. The overall average in both wards was 51.66% or almost 52%, which still seemed to be higher than expected for the national average, but probably close to the average for the socio-economic and ethnic components of which the two wards were composed.

Hospital policy during the time of the survey was that patients were placed on admittance in wards according to the location of the patient's residence prior to hospitalization. For example, Wards #107 and #108 were composed entirely of patients whose homes were in East Los Angeles. They were approximately 50% Negro, 50% Caucasian, of whom about 25% were Mexican-Americans. To avoid overloading the survey with one socio-economic or ethnic group, Wards #213, #303, and #403 were examined. These other wards were composed of patients whose homes were in Long Beach, nearby Orange County, and other areas in and contiguous to the city of Los Angeles. This gave the survey as wide a sampling of different socio-economic and ethnic groups as could be achieved. In order to avoid any possibility of biasing, other interns<sup>2</sup> assisted in the examination of the files in each of the wards where they were working. Parental absence followed

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<sup>2</sup>Roy Bullock, Benjamin Pao, and James Seeber.

these criteria:

1. An absent parent is one who is physically absent from the family household before the patient has reached the age of fifteen years. Physical absence must be due to death, desertion, or prolonged absence such as imprisonment or hospitalization (five years minimum) before the patient has reached the age of fifteen.

2. A parent is considered absent if he has left the family household due to legal separation or divorce before the patient has reached the age of fifteen.

It will be noted that a distinction in the above criteria was made so that each may be considered as a separate category. For instance, absence due to divorce or separation may be indicative of a family situation which may contribute to the patient's later psychotic behavior requiring hospitalization. On the other hand, it is also possible that the patient's behavior (psychogenesis undetermined from the family history) may have contributed to the parent's separation or divorce rather than the other way around. This distinction was also influenced by the fact that in Wards #107 and #108, with the high incidence of Negro patients, father absence is likely to be caused by reasons other than legal separation or divorce.

Psychic absence, such as parental rejection,



abuse and the like, was not measured in this sampling.

TABLE III

(Both males and females)

1. Mother Loss . . . . .	10
2. Father Loss . . . . .	30
3. Both Parents Absent . . . . .	5
4. Divorce or separation . . . . .	17
5. Parents not absent. . . . .	69
6. Unknown . . . . .	<u>59</u>
	190

In the total population of the survey on which information was available, parental absence due to all causes was .473% or a little more than 47%.

The breakdown between male and female patients is as follows:

TABLE IV

(Males only)

1. Mother loss . . . . .	3
2. Father loss . . . . .	11
3. Both parents absent . . . . .	2
4. Divorce or separation . . . . .	7
5. Parents not absent . . . . .	14
6. Unknown . . . . .	<u>8</u>
	45

TABLE V

(Females only)

1. Mother loss . . . . .	7
2. Father loss . . . . .	19
3. Both parents absent . . . . .	3
4. Divorce or separation . . . . .	10
5. Parents not absent . . . . .	55
6. Unknown . . . . .	<u>51</u>
	145

Each patient whose file was examined for parental absence was marked according to a diagnostic impression made by the admitting psychiatrist. It was noted that the greatest number of parental absences occurred in patients who were diagnosed as schizophrenic. Schizophrenia, in one form or another was the diagnosis of .684% of the cases, or almost 70% in the total population of the wards surveyed. It was also noted that father absence occurred much more frequently than mother absence in males than in the female patients. Eliminating all psychotic categories, such as involutional psychosis (22 cases) and other illnesses such as chronic brain syndrome (13 cases) and the like, the following data were compiled.

TABLE VI

(Both male and female schizophrenics)

1. Mother loss . . . . .	5
2. Father loss . . . . .	20
3. Both parents absent . . . . .	3
4. Divorce or separation . . . . .	16
5. Parents not absent . . . . .	49
6. Unknown . . . . .	42
	<hr/>
	134

TABLE VII

(Male schizophrenics only)

1.	Mother loss . . . . .	1
2.	Father loss . . . . .	8
3.	Both parents absent . . . . .	2
4.	Divorce or separation . . . . .	6
5.	Parents not absent . . . . .	13
6.	Unknown . . . . .	4
		<u>34</u>

TABLE VIII

(Female schizophrenics only)

1.	Mother loss . . . . .	4
2.	Father loss . . . . .	12
3.	Both parents absent . . . . .	1
4.	Divorce or separation . . . . .	9
5.	Parents not absent . . . . .	36
6.	Unknown . . . . .	38
		<u>100</u>

Because Wards #107 and #108 were composed of patients from the same socio-economic residential area, and with about the same distribution of ethnic elements, the following breakdown of male and female schizophrenics is shown.

TABLE IX

(Ward #107, female schizophrenics only)

1.	Mother loss . . . . .	0
2.	Father loss . . . . .	1
3.	Both parents absent . . . . .	1
4.	Divorce or separation . . . . .	5
5.	Parents not absent . . . . .	10
6.	Unknown . . . . .	8
		<u>25</u>

TABLE X

(Ward #108, male schizophrenics only)

1. Mother loss . . . . .	1
2. Father loss . . . . .	6
3. Both parents absent . . . . .	2
4. Divorce or separation . . . . .	7
5. Parents not absent . . . . .	11
6. Unknown . . . . .	4
	<hr/> 31

In comparing the degree of frequency of father loss over mother loss between male and female schizophrenics in Wards #107 and #108, it was found that father loss occurred more frequently than mother loss in the male ward than in the female ward. The degree of difference between father loss over mother loss between the two groups was found to approach statistical significance ( $\chi^2 = 2.958$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $.10 > p < .05$ ). In other words, if the  $\chi^2$  had equaled or was greater than 3.841, the findings would have been considered statistically significant. If, however, the figure lies between 2.706 and 3.841 (measured on a degree of frequency equaling 1) the findings are classified as approaching statistical significance. Therefore, further investigation was indicated.

### Discussion of this Survey

A major limitation of this survey is the lack of a control group. The two groups (Wards #107 and #108) from which a reasonably valid comparison could be made, was much too small to be conclusive. Although the groups were composed of males and females from the same depressed "ghetto" area, they were not matched as to age, age at time of father loss, the mother's adjustment to her husband's absence, nor her behavior toward her children before and after the absence occurred. The author hesitated to report the findings of this survey in the present study because of the obvious limitations in the design. Furthermore, psychosis, particularly schizophrenia, was not intended to be included in the study until after the survey was made, but the observed frequencies of father loss over mother loss for males in this population appeared to be so much greater among male schizophrenics than female schizophrenics that it warranted further investigation. The findings, although not statistically significant in this population, raised the following questions:

1. Does father loss leave his male offspring without an adequate father image, so that lacking an adequate male figure with whom to identify, he experiences

schizophrenic decompensation in an attempt to achieve sex-role identification?

2. Does father loss have a direct bearing only upon the mother who, in turn, becomes schizophrenogenic in reaction to her husband's absence? In other words, does the husbandless mother cause schizophrenia in her son(s) because lacking a husband and father to her son(s) causes her to play an overcontrolling role or an ambivalent role toward them?

3. Is schizophrenia biogenetic which predisposes a child to schizophrenia, and familial and social interpersonal relationships disrupted by a father loss, are only secondary and subsidiary to this factor, perhaps only precipitating the onset of schizophrenic decompensation?

These questions prompted the author to peruse studies dealing with schizophrenia in quest of some findings leading to conclusions which could be helpful to the pastoral counselor, and other interested persons, in better understanding the etiology of schizophrenia or a schizoid personality and the part an absent father may have upon its occurrence.

#### Literature Dealing with Parents of Schizophrenics

The following studies indicate that schizophrenics are exposed to a mothering role which is different from

that of the nonschizophrenic.

A study by Yi-Chuang Lu compared 50 male and female schizophrenic patients with their non-schizophrenic siblings who were near the age of the patient of the same sex. He found the schizophrenic patient when a child tended to have his significant others limited and concentrated in his parents, sometimes only one parent, especially the mother, when compared with his nonschizophrenic sibling.<sup>3</sup>

O'Neal and Robins<sup>4</sup> found that the schizophrenic is exposed early in his life to overcontrolling roles by his mother. Using information from childhood case histories the authors noted a striking amount of overdependence on their mothers by the preschizophrenic group.

A similar type of study by McCord, Porta and McCord<sup>5</sup> indicated that the mothers of schizophrenics played an overcontrolling role. These mothers were

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<sup>3</sup>Yi-Chuang Lu, "Mother-Child Role Relations in Schizophrenia," Psychiatry, XXIV (1961), 133-142.

<sup>4</sup>P. E. O'Neal and L. N. Robins, "Childhood Patterns Predictive of Adult Schizophrenia: A 30 Year Follow-up Study," American Journal of Psychiatry, CXV (1958), 385-391.

<sup>5</sup>William McCord, J. Porta and Joan McCord, "The Familial Genesis of Psychoses," Psychiatry, XXV (1962), 60-70.

described as commanding figures who tended to overawe and control both their sons and their husbands. From childhood through adolescence, the son was controlled, advised and directed by the mother, even forced to follow her will. Usually this domination was accomplished under a cloak of solicitous love.

Lidz, Fleck, Alanen and Cornelison<sup>6</sup> found that the mother of the male patient was engulfing the son, seeking to maintain a symbiotic closeness with him when compared with his nonschizophrenic siblings.

In their study of ten families, Bowen, Dysinger, and Basamania<sup>7</sup> found mother and son an intense twosome from which the father was excluded or permitted himself to be excluded.

Bowen elsewhere observes that a schizophrenic child plays the role of "helpless infant" to the mother, which permits her to feel secure in playing the role of an adequate adult under normal interactions. The emotional stabilization resulting from the child's "being for the mother" enables the father to have a

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<sup>6</sup>T. Lidz, S. Fleck, Y. O. Alanen and A. R. Cornelison, "Schizophrenic Patients and Their Siblings," Psychiatry, XXVI (1963), 1-18.

<sup>7</sup>M. Bowan, R. H. Dysinger and B. Basamania, "The Role of the Father in Families with a Schizophrenic Patient," American Journal of Psychiatry, CXV (1959), 1017-1020.



less anxious role in relation to the mother, the son makes it possible for both parents to have a less disturbed adjustment.<sup>8</sup>

In earlier studies of Teitze,<sup>9</sup> Reichard and Tillman,<sup>10</sup> Prout and White,<sup>11</sup> Gerald and Siegal,<sup>12</sup> Freeman and Grayson,<sup>13</sup> and Mark,<sup>14</sup> also found that greater restrictiveness, excessive devotion and greater involvement toward their sons was characteristic of the

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<sup>8</sup>Murray Bowen, "A Family Concept of Schizophrenia," in Don D. Jackson, The Etiology of Schizophrenia (New York: Basic Books, 1960).

<sup>9</sup>T. Tietze, "The Study of Mothers of Schizophrenic Patients," Psychiatry, XII (1949), 55-65.

<sup>10</sup>S. Reichard and C. Tillman, "Patterns of Parent-Child Relationships in Schizophrenia," Psychiatry, XIII (1950), 247.

<sup>11</sup>C. T. Prout and Mary A. White, "A Controlled Study of Personality Relationships in Mothers of Schizophrenic Male Patients," American Journal of Psychiatry, CVII (1950), 251-256.

<sup>12</sup>D. L. Gerald and J. Siegal, "The Family Background of Schizophrenia," Psychiatric Quarterly, XXIV (1950), 47-73.

<sup>13</sup>R. H. Freeman, and H. M. Grayson, "Maternal Attitudes in Schizophrenia," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, XLVIII (1953), 45-52.

<sup>14</sup>J. G. Mark, "The Attitudes of the Mothers of Male Schizophrenics Towards Child Behavior," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, XLVIII (1953), 185-189.

mothers of schizophrenics. Schizophrenogenic mothers were the dominant members of their family and their relationship with the schizophrenic child was one of overprotectiveness when compared with normal controls.

In regard to the father's role in the family of the schizophrenic, the following studies show that he is likely to play a role less dominant to that of the mother in relationship with the family, either by his absence or his passivity.

McCord, Porta and McCord<sup>15</sup> report that the father of schizophrenics was either absent or passive. If he was present he played a minor, unpowerful role in the family with the mother as the commanding figure.

Farina<sup>16</sup> in his study also found the father of schizophrenics to be inadequate in his role within the family. On the other hand, father-dominance was found to be associated with good premorbid adjustment of the schizophrenic son, and mother dominance characterized sons with poor premorbid adjustment. The author interprets this result as indicating that it has been easier for the good premorbid group to acquire the

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<sup>15</sup>McCord, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup>A. Farina, "Patterns of Role Dominance and Conflict in Parents of Schizophrenic Patients," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, LXI (1960), 31-38.

expected behavior of an adult male and to achieve a somewhat higher level of maturity.<sup>17</sup>

### Other Theoretical Considerations Regarding Schizophrenia

The foregoing review of studies would lead one to conclude that there is a persistently characteristic relationship between parents and children who later manifest schizophrenic decompensation. The biological aspect of the etiology of schizophrenia must also be considered.

Noyes and Kolb state:

Genetic studies have shown with consistency that if the member of a family is schizophrenic, the risk for siblings and children approximates the range of 7 to 16 per cent, and for parents, 5 to 10 per cent. In families with two affected parents, the risk is calculated at 40 per cent for their children. Kallman<sup>18</sup> found that if the disorder exists in one of monozygotic twins, it occurs also in the other twin in 85.8 per cent of the cases. However, the expectancy for the dizygotic twin partner is 14 per cent, equivalent to that of the siblings. . . .

Kallman is of the opinion that the development of schizophrenia takes place only in a predisposed individual as that of a complex interplay of later constitutional and environmental factors.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>See also A. Farina, M. Garnezy and J. Becker, "Pre-morbid Behavior and Prognosis in Female Schizophrenic Patients," Journal of Consulting Psychologists, II (1962), 56-60.

<sup>18</sup>F. J. Kallman, Heridity in Health and Mental Illness (New York: Norton, 1953.)

<sup>19</sup>Arthur P. Noyes and Lawrence C. Kolb, Modern Clinical Psychiatry (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1966), p.329.

The work of Bender<sup>20</sup> and Goldfarb<sup>21</sup> and others who have had a wide experience with childhood schizophrenia, are impressed with the importance of biological factors. Bender believes that it results from "a developmental lag of the biological processes from which subsequent behavior evolves by maturation at an embryological level, leading to anxiety and secondarily to neurotic defense mechanisms."<sup>22</sup> In her opinion, the fundamental pathological process is a diffuse encephalopathy for which no confirming anatomical evidence is described.

In a recent book, Jackson<sup>23</sup> systematically destroys the arguments offered by the genetisists, specifically the Kallman studies. He says:

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<sup>20</sup>Lauretta Bender, "Childhood Schizophrenia: Clinical Study of One Hundred Schizophrenic Children," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XVII (1947), 40-56.

Lauretta Bender, "Childhood Schizophrenia," Psychiatric Quarterly, XXVII (1953), 663-681.

Lauretta Bender, "Twenty Years of Clinical Research on Schizophrenic Children With Special Reference to Those Under Six Years of Age," in G. Caplan (ed.), Emotional Problems of Early Childhood (New York: Basic Books, 1955), pp. 503-515.

<sup>21</sup>W. Goldfarb, Childhood Schizophrenia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961).

<sup>22</sup>Cited in Noyes and Kolb, op. cit., p. 350. (Underscoring this author's.)

<sup>23</sup>Don D. Jackson, Myth of Madness (New York: Macmillan, 1964.)

The pineal theory, the blood-type theory, the mesodermal theory, the body-build theory constitute a sampling of hypotheses about how the genes work to cause mental disorder. But the theory that sometimes seems to have by far the most supporters is without a technical name, although it might well be called the "up-side-down theory." That is, the action of the genes is simply taken for granted, and because parent, child, brother and sister behave in similar ways, it is assumed that the behavior is genetically caused. This position naturally influences diagnosis, diagnosis influences the statistics, and we return full circle, having used the hypothesis as proof of the hypothesis.<sup>24</sup>

Jackson argues convincingly, but the persistence of the geneticists and their evidence tends to indicate that the predisposition of some individuals to emotional ills cannot be discounted any more than can some individuals who are genetically subject to organic weaknesses of the heart, lungs, the brain, be discounted.

Because emotional disorders are behavioral problems, a discussion of familial interaction in the case of schizophrenia is indicated.

### The Schizophrenic Family

Although schizophrenic decompensation often occurs suddenly, careful examination of the patient's developmental history discloses that there have been

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

mand indications of personality disturbances in earlier years. The evidence thus far seems to indicate that these personality disturbances occur more frequently in families that could be described as "disturbed" or even "schizophrenogenic."

It is asked, is the child predisposed to schizophrenia because of inherent biological factors as Kallman and others propose or is the child caught in a "double-bind? of verbal and behavioral conflict as Bateson, et. al.<sup>25</sup> suggest? Why is one child destined to become schizophrenic, whereas other children in the same family escape the onset of schizophrenic decompensation? Noyes and Kolb state:

From the various studies of family dynamics of the past decade, it has been found with significant frequency that schizophrenic patients have spent their childhood in seriously disturbed family groups in which both parents gave evidence of personality disturbance. In the Litz studies, two-thirds of the families contained one parent who was found to be schizophrenic. Such family groups are unintegrated and relate through conflict in which the parents oppose each other by derogating and defying the wishes of the spouse and by efforts to win the children to their side to obtain from them the emotional support not found in the spouse. In other families, the parental relationship is disordered in that one parent has serious personality deficit, shown in domineering, brutal, aggressive, or alcoholic behavior, while the other passively accepts his

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<sup>25</sup> Gregory Bateson, D. D. Johnson, J. Haley and J. H. Weakland, "A Note on the Double-Bind--1962," Family Process II (1963), 154-161.

behavior or is absent when the child is exposed to an unwholesome atmosphere. Such parents often are doubtful of their own sex roles, some have been homosexual, and others were in conflict over control of incestuous desires.<sup>26</sup>

Satir<sup>27</sup> suggests that when a child manifests disturbed behavior usually all members of the family contribute to his pathology because the whole family is dysfunctional.

Ackerman<sup>28</sup> says that "the primary patient, whether he be a child or adult, proves often to be an emissary in disguise of an emotionally warped family group."

Clinical observations by the Palo Alto group<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Noyes and Kolb, Modern Clinical Psychiatry, p. 331.

<sup>27</sup>Virginia Satir, Conjoint Family Therapy (Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books, 1964).

<sup>28</sup>Nathan Ackerman, The Psychodynamics of Family Life (New York: Basic Books, 1958), p. 104.

<sup>29</sup>Mental Research Institute, Palo Alto, California, Some of the publications of these former members which are relevant to this emphasis are as follows:

Don D. Jackson, "A Note of the Genesis of Trauma in Schizophrenia," Psychiatry, XX (1957), 181-184.

Don D. Jackson, "The Question of Family Homeostasis," Psychiatric Quarterly Supplement, XXXI (1957), 70-90.

Jay Haley, "Direct Study of Child-Parent Interaction: III, Observation of the Family of the Schizophrenic," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XXX (1960), 460-467.

Jay Haley, "The Family of the Schizophrenic: A Model System," Journal of Nervous Mental Disorders,

conclude that families with a schizophrenic member responded in similar ways to the individual treatment of this member. Satir sums up these conclusions:

Other family members interfered with, tried to become part of, or sabotaged the individual treatment of the "sick" member, as though the family had a stake in his sickness.

The hospitalized or incarcerated patient often got worse or regressed after a visit from family members, as though family interaction had a direct bearing on his symptoms.

Other family members got worse as the patient got better, as though sickness in one of the family members were essential to the family's way of operating.<sup>30</sup>

In other words, the "identified patient" is necessary to the family's homeostasis. The "sick" family is objectified in the "sick" patient. He becomes the scapegoat<sup>31</sup> for the rest of the family. He is labeled the "queer one" or the "quiet one," or he becomes the one who "acts out" in order to direct attention toward himself in a desperate attempt to distract his parents from aggressive and hostile interaction with one another.

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CXXIX (1959), 357-374.

Gregory Bateson, "Minimal Requirements for a Theory of Schizophrenia," Archives of General Psychiatry, II (1960), 477-491.

<sup>30</sup>Satir, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>31</sup>N. W. Bell and E. F. Vogel, "The Emotionally Disturbed Child as the Family Scapegoat," in their The Family (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).



### Some Conclusions

Granted that certain individuals are constitutionally vulnerable to distortions in neurophysiological processes due to biochemical disturbances and/or biological factors that predispose schizophrenic decompensation, yet when a father absence occurs prior to a child attaining his fifteenth birthday, it causes one or more of the following to occur in some children, especially the male:

1. Mother is forced into an overcontrolling role in which the target child is controlled, advised and directed by her, thereby stifling his role identity.

2. The target child is seduced by the mother to play a symbiotic role in order to compensate for her emotional needs over the loss of her husband.

3. Mother assumes an ambivalent role, trying to be both mother and father to her children and ends up by being inadequate in both roles.

4. Some mothers as a result of their ambivalent "mother-father" role diffusion set up a "double-bind" of conflicting communication of two mutually exclusive messages so that the child least able to discriminate between the two messages develops a schizoid response habit.

5. Mother who is already by nature a commanding figure is better able to pursue her schizophrenogenic behavior more readily without a father or husband present to counter the engulfing behavior.

6. Therefore, prolonged or complete father absence during childhood tends to disrupt sex-role identification in the boy, and the child without a strong and effective adult male figure with whom to identify is more inclined to a schizoid personality.

It is apparent that all persons who suffer a father loss are not going to become psychotic. Some children make a reasonably good adjustment because they have the constitutional strength and psychic resiliency to overcome the most severe and deprived home conditions. Yet for all those who do escape psychotic episodes requiring hospitalization, there are many who suffer psychic damage as a result of paternal deprivation due to father loss, rejection and weak, ineffectual father models. These individuals who lack a secure sex-role identification figure are likely to make a poorer adjustment in their relationships with their mate, their children, and with society, even though they may never require hospitalization.

## CHAPTER IX

### FATHER ABSENCE AND CHARACTER DISORDERS

#### 1. DELINQUENCY

##### Father Absence

Bowlby placed great emphasis upon the criminogenesis of mother-child separation during the first five years of life.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Bowlby has been criticized for ignoring the pathogenic paternal factor in delinquency. In his earlier study of 44 thieves, 17 of them were described as having suffered complete and prolonged separation six months or more from their mothers, whereas of the same 44 thieves little significance is given to the fact that of the fathers 5 had died, 7 were absent through desertion or divorce, and 5 had been separated from the child for significant lengths of time. In other words, an equal number of children had fathers absent as did children who had

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<sup>1</sup>John Bowlby, "Forty-four Juvenile Thieves," International Journal of Psychoanalysis, XXV (1944), 1-53; 107-140.

<sup>2</sup>John Bowlby, "Maternal Care and Mental Health," World Health Organization, Monograph Series, 2 (1951).

mothers absent. No specific reference was made to the father in 16 of the cases; therefore nothing is known about their presence or absence. Despite Bowlby's neglect of father absence as significant enough for consideration, the importance of Bowlby's work is unquestioned. His emphasis upon maternal deprivation produced a great number of other studies at the time. Studies have since been made in an attempt to determine the pathogenesis of father absence in juvenile delinquency. Some of these studies are rather surprising in light of previous assumptions regarding the relative unimportance of father loss in comparison with mother loss.

### "The Broken Home"

Wilkins points out in a recent review of delinquency research and theory that "for the past 50 years the most commonly quoted 'cause' of juvenile delinquency has been the 'broken home.'"<sup>3</sup> This term has become a catch-all to describe absence of one or both parents due to desertion, separation and divorce or death. Although the concept of the broken home is not satisfactory for

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<sup>3</sup>L. T. Wilkins, "Juvenile Delinquency: A Critical Review of Research and Theory," Educational Research V (1963), 104-119.

scientific purposes, the figures in Table XI may be helpful, even though for various reasons they are not comparable. The table shows that the broken home has been found to occur rather frequently in character disorders not only in the United States, but in other countries as well.

TABLE XI

INCIDENCE OF BROKEN HOMES AMONG PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM  
VARIOUS FORMS OF NEUROTIC DISABILITY

Author	Country	Nature of Disability	Number of Patients	% from broken homes before the age of <u>6 yrs</u> - <u>16 yrs</u>	
Glueck & Glueck	USA	juvenile delinquency	966	19	44
Armstrong	USA	running away	660	57	
Powdermaker et. al.	USA	delinquent girls	81		40
Ahnsiö	Sweden	delinquent girls	1,663		60
Ottersröm	Sweden	delinquent boys and girls	1,315 300		42 65
Menut	France	children with behavior problems	839		66
Ministry of Health	Eng. & Wales	maladjusted children	418		45
Safler et. al.	USA	promiscuous men and women	255 365		60
Bundesen et. al.	USA	promiscuous men	50		56
Madow & Hardy	USA	neurotic soldiers	211		36
Pollock et. al.	USA	schizophrenia	175		38
Lidz & Lidz	USA	young schizophrenics	50		40
Csillag & Hendri	Hungary	accident proneness	100		54
Mulock & Houwer	Nether-lands	treason in children	275		52

[Note: This table is taken from Maternal Care and Mental Health, op. cit., p. 164.]

### Father Absence

White, in discussing conduct disorders, describes a juvenile delinquent as a person who is acting out some part of his problem at the expense of others. The delinquent is characterized as taking out his troubles on the world by violating codes and conventions or by leading an irresponsible and useless life. "The superego is either feeble or so formed that it permits leakage of antisocial conduct at certain points."<sup>4</sup>

According to psychoanalytic theory, the establishment of the superego occurs with the successful resolution of the Oedipal situation. Fear of the loss of one's parents over a disapproved "misdeed," is changed into censorious feelings from within.

The superego is the heir of the parents not only as a source of threats and punishments but also as a source of protection and as a provider of reassuring love. Being on good or bad terms with one's superego becomes as important as being on good or bad terms with one's parents previously was. The change from parents to superego in this respect is a prerequisite of the individual's independence. Self-esteem is no longer regulated by approval or rejection by external objects, but rather by the feeling of having done or not having

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<sup>4</sup>Robert W. White, The Abnormal Personality (New York: Ronald Press, 1964), p. 356.

done the right thing. Complying with the super-ego's demands brings not only relief but also definite feelings of pleasure and external supplies of love. Refusing this compliance brings feelings of guilt and remorse which are similar to the child's feelings of being not loved any more.<sup>5</sup>

Peter Blos, in a recent book on adolescence, observed that the "adolescent wages a battle against authority figures with the collaborative support of the group, the influence of which mitigates superego as well as social anxiety."<sup>6</sup> Blos paraphrases and in part quotes Fritz Redl regarding the problem of group formative processes in adolescence.

The latency child accepts a "patriarchal or matriarchal sovereign-type of group pattern, "but the pre-adolescent is intensively attracted by the gang type of group relationship. . . . Even very egotistic and spoiled persons may go through a phase of intense loyalty to a gang. It brings prestige. . . . A considerable degree of security is derived from this type of group relationship. They are desperately in need of expressing suppressed drives and urges. Many of them need drive protection more than drive sublimation. . . . The adolescent exhibits a growing preference for more sublimated group formation. The needs of youth seek outlets in the group which also protects them from guilt feelings and anxieties, and leads into more mature patterns of life. . . . The delinquent youngster, however, retains his need for preadolescent drive protection against the educative process. This is why so-called 'criminal' gangs are obviously fixed at the preadolescent level of gang formation."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Otto Fenichel, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York: Norton, 1945), p. 105.

<sup>6</sup>Peter Blos, On Adolescence (New York: Free Press, 1966), pp. 201 f.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



Blos also points to another factor which describes the adolescent's projected aggression:

Observation has indicated that many adolescents brought up by benign and permissive parents exhibit the most severe superego problems; these are, in fact, problems of unresolved ambivalence. Adolescent aggression which is not turned against the parent or the superego, or against the self, is projected on parental images in the social environment--police, teacher, bosses.<sup>8</sup>

Glueck and Glueck make this statement:

There is no doubt that a warm tie between father and son is of great significance in helping a boy to develop a wholesome set of ideals through the process of emotional "identification" with the father. Should this bond not be close, the growing child may seek a substitute in companionship with delinquent children; or he may pass through a stage of grave insecurity, frustration, or resentment, with resulting psychoneurotic symptoms. It is highly significant, therefore, that only four out of every ten of the fathers of the delinquents, as compared with eight in ten of the fathers of the non-delinquents, evidenced warmth, sympathy, and affection toward their boys.<sup>9</sup>

With the loss of a parent at any of the psychosexual stages, especially during the phallic and puberty stages, causes the child to experience problems in resolving parental difficulties with the remaining parent. Furthermore, the child is more likely to find

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Delinquents In the Making, Paths to Prevention (New York: Harper Brothers, 1952), p. 62.

outside support and security in gangs to replace the loss of the needed parent.

In regard to the etiology of delinquency, Warren says that the presence of "the father may be at least as importance as the mother's for the emotional development of the child. Whether his influence is exerted mainly on the child direct, or exerted indirectly through his effect on the well-being of the mother is not clear."<sup>10</sup> This was written in 1957. More recent studies show that the absence of the father occurs much more frequently in instances of juvenile delinquency than the absence of mother.

Robert Andry concludes in a recent study:

To sum up the results of the present study, the author feels that they provide strong indications:

1. that the role of fathers is of great significance in the aetiology of delinquency and that the supremacy of the role of mothers (as claimed by the their of "maternal deprivation") is questionable as a universal feature.<sup>11</sup>

Jackson reports:

Troubled children come from troubled homes. . . .  
One hundred psychopathic children (64 severely  
enough disturbed to be sent to a mental hospital

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<sup>10</sup>W. Warren, "Conduct Disorders in Children Aged Five to Fifteen Years," British Journal of Delinquency, I (1957), 164-186. [Quoted from p. 181.]

<sup>11</sup>Robert G. Andry, Delinquency and Parental Pathology (London: Methuen, 1960), p. 130.

for observation as psychopathic delinquents) had family and social backgrounds that were far from ordinary. . . . In only 20 cases was the father or his substitute in a stable job.<sup>12</sup>

Gregory says:

Delinquency in boys was found to be much more frequent than average among boys who had lost their fathers by parental separation or divorce, and somewhat more frequent than average among those who had lost their father by death.

Delinquency in girls was more frequent among those whose parents had been separated or divorced, those who had lost mother by death, those who were living with father only, and those who were living with neither parents.

These findings suggest that the identification model provided the control normally exercised by the parent of the same sex are crucial in preventing delinquency among boys and girls than any aspect of the relationship with the parent of the opposite sex.<sup>13</sup>

Siegmann<sup>14</sup> suggests that all factors which tend to produce strong identification with mother and failure of early identification with father tends to produce antisocial behavior, consequently the father-absent groups evidenced more antisocial behavior when compared with the father present group.

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<sup>12</sup>Don D. Jackson, Myth of Madness (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 130.

<sup>13</sup>Ian Gregory, "Anterospective Data Following Childhood Loss of a Parent; I. Delinquency and High School Drop-out," Archives of General Psychiatry, XIII (1965), 99-109.

<sup>14</sup>Aron W. Siegmann, "Father Absence During Early Childhood and Antisocial Behavior," Journal of Abnormal Psychology, LXXI (1966), 71-74.

An interesting study was made by Ivy Bennett in which she compared delinquent and neurotic children.

She says:

Delinquent children experienced a greater number of interruptions in their relationship with their fathers than have neurotic children. The correlation between delinquency and broken relationships with the father is high and positive throughout childhood and especially marked at ages seven to eleven years and in the second and third years.

It is interesting to note that a greater number of interruptions occur in the father-child relationship than in the mother-child relationship.<sup>15</sup>

The Study by Bennett has tables showing the loss comparisons between mothers and fathers of delinquent and neurotic children. These tables are shown so that comparisons may be made with the survey undertaken in the present study of psychotic patients.

TABLE XII

	ABSENCE OR DEATH OF PARENTS					
	Delinquent			Neurotic		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Mother dead	1	3	4	0	1	1
Father dead	2	2	4	1	2	3
Both dead	0	1	1	0	0	0
Mother absent	3	10	13	2	8	10
Father absent	14	19	33	5	14	19
Both absent	3	10	13	2	6	8
One or both unknown	2	3	5	1	1	2

<sup>15</sup>Ivy Bennett, Delinquent and Neurotic Children  
A Comparative Study (New York: Basic Books, 1960), p. 164.  
 (Underscoring this author's.)

When the above table is compared to Table III (p. 92 of this study) the neurotic column shows an identical ratio of 3 to 1 between father and mother dead. A rather striking finding in the above table is the ratio between father and mother absence (about 5 to 1) in the delinquent girl column.

TABLE XIII

DISTURBED EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FAMILY

Relationship	Delinquent	Neurotic	$\chi^2$
Disturbed mother-child	42	31	5.07*
Disturbed father-child	35	15	17.70**
Disturbed mother-father	26	15	5.22*

\*Significant at the .05: \*\*Significant at the .01 level.

From these results one may conclude that delinquent children tend to show disturbed emotional relationships within the family more frequently than do neurotic children. It is interesting to note the high proportion of delinquents as compared with neurotics who have disturbed relationships with their fathers. These tables are found on pages 502 and 503 of the Bennett study.

The most recent, and as yet unpublished, study by Anderson<sup>16</sup> sheds more light upon the occurrence of father

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<sup>16</sup>Robert E. Anderson, "Where's Dad? Paternal Deprivation and Delinquency," (Washington, D. C.: National Training School, May, 1967).

absence in regard to juvenile offenders. Perhaps the most interesting finding, other than the frequency of father absence over mother absence in distinguishing between delinquent and nondelinquent boys, is that when the absence of the father occurs seems to be age-related. Only when absence of father occurs after the age of twelve, do the differences between the delinquent and the nondelinquent boys become highly significant. Seven out of ten Negro delinquents and five out of ten white delinquents experienced such deprivation.

The Anderson study suggests the following hypotheses:

1. The presence of the boy's father is crucial to the development of internal controls and direction of behavior in the years after age four, and particularly during early adolescence.
2. The time of life when substitution for an absent father tends to be most effective in preventing the development of delinquent tendencies is during the age period four to eight.
3. The absence of a father after the age of twelve suggests that the lack of the father's authority and control is a major factor in juvenile misconduct.

### Delinquency Among Girls

The girl's delinquency repertoire is far more limited in scope and variety than the boy's; furthermore it lacks significantly in destructive aggressive acts against persons and property, and also does not show the boy's imposter-like adventuring. The girl's wayward behavior is restricted to stealing of the kleptomaniac type; to vagrancy; to provocative, impudent behavior in public; and to frank sexual waywardness. Of course, these offences are shared by the boy offender; they constitute, however, only a fraction of his transgressions. In the girl, it seems, delinquency is an overt sexual act; or, to be more correct, it is sexual acting out.<sup>17</sup>

Elsewhere Bloss says:

. . . [the] delinquent girl has not only experienced an oedipal defeat at the hands of a--literally or figuratively--distant, cruel or absent father, but, in addition, she has also witnessed her mother's dissatisfaction with her husband; mother and daughter share their disappointment, and a strong and highly ambivalent bond continues to exist between them. Under these circumstances no satisfactory identification with mother can be achieved; instead, a hostile or negative identification forces a destructive and indestructible relationship between mother and daughter. Young adolescent girls of this type quite consciously fantasize that if only they could be in their mother's place the father would show his true self, that he would be transfigured by their love into the man of their oedipal wishes. In real life such delinquent girls promiscuously choose sexual partners who possess glaring personality defects which are denied or tolerated with masochistic submissiveness.

In more general terms we may say that her delinquent behavior is motivated by the girl's need for

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<sup>17</sup> Bloss, op. cit. pp. 230 f.

the constant possession of a partner who serves her to surmount in fantasy an oedipal impasse--but more important than this, to take revenge on the mother who had hated, rejected or ridiculed the father.<sup>18</sup>

Bennett says:

It is also quite striking that out of twenty delinquent girls studied, fourteen have been reared almost without fathers, or with the father absent during long periods of their lives.<sup>19</sup>

In a review of twenty cases of prostitution, Maerov found that these girls suffered deprivation and rejection from both parent figures.<sup>20</sup>

#### Causes of Delinquency Other Than Parental Absence

Parents may find vicarious gratification of their own poorly integrated impulses in the amoral and anti-social behavior of the child and unconsciously encourage this behavior. Such neurotic needs of the parent exist because of some current inability to satisfy them in the experiences of the world of adults or because of psychic crippling experiences in the parent's own childhood.<sup>21</sup>

Adelaide Johnson calls this kind of vicarious

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<sup>19</sup>Bennett, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>20</sup>A. S. Maerov, "Prostitution: A Survey and Review of 20 Cases," Psychiatric Quarterly, XXXIX:4 (1965), 675-701.

<sup>21</sup>Stanislaus A. Szurek, "Notes on the Genesis of Psychopathic Personality Trends," Psychiatry, V (1942), 1-6.



living through one's children "superego lacuna"<sup>22</sup> in which the parent enjoys the child's anti-social behavior ostensibly protesting the behavior but subtly encouraging it.

Knight<sup>23</sup> tells of the account of a father who lived the life of a respectable citizen, but acted out his hidden, criminal impulses through his son.

### Summary of Conclusions Regarding Delinquency

The presence or absence of a father in the home has either a direct or indirect influence upon the development of the child and his later behavior. Recent studies indicate that father absence is of much greater importance etiologically than had hitherto been assumed in delinquency. The father is most important in sex-role learning, particularly at the earlier stages of development. Miriam Johnson says that the sex role learning for both males and females is dependent upon an adequate identification with the father. "More specifically, sex role learning is the internalization of a

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<sup>22</sup>Adelaide M. Johnson, "Sanctions for Superego Lacunae of Adolescents," Searchlights on Delinquency (New York: International University Press, 1949), pp. 225-245.

<sup>23</sup>James A. Knight, "Acting Out Through the Child," Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XXX (1960), 422-423.

reciprocal role relationship wherein the father is the key parent."<sup>24</sup>

Father absence immediately after the age of twelve is likely to cause anti-social behavior, especially in the boy, because the child either has difficulty resolving the re-occurring Oedipal conflict, or he has no paternal authority and control factor to stabilize him during this "acting out" period.

A quotation from the Psychological Abstracts in reviewing the foreign publication of M. L. Langeveld<sup>25</sup> sums up the problem of the absent father in yet another way:

It is felt that mothers who try to take over the role of the father does the wrong thing; her children have neither a father nor a mother.

## 2. SUICIDE

### The Broken Home as a Predeterminant of Suicidal Tendency

Zilboorg was the first to point out that people who commit or attempt suicide show a high incidence of

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<sup>24</sup>Miriam M. Johnson, "Sex Role Learning in the Neuclear Family," Child Development, XXIV:2 (1963) 319-333, [quoted from p. 319].

<sup>25</sup>M. L. Langeveld, "Zum Problem des Vaters in der Entwicklung des männlichen Kindes," (Lack of Father in the Development of the Male Child.) Vita Humana, VII:1 (1961), 33-48.

broken homes during childhood.<sup>26</sup>

Batchelor and Mapier<sup>27</sup> studying 200 cases of suicide in Edinburgh, found that broken homes during childhood to be the highest indicator of suicide. Of the 200, 58% had had such an experience.

Schrut<sup>28</sup> talked of finding broken homes and poor child-parent relationships in his study of suicidal attempts in adolescent females.

In a recent masters thesis, Waldron<sup>29</sup> found that of 55 men and 51 women in her study, 27 of the men and 31 of the women had come from broken homes prior to the age of 17. Approximately 50% of the men and a little over 60% of the women came from broken homes. She concludes that the loss of a parent for any reason prior to reaching the age of 17 increases the likelihood of a person becoming suicidal.

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<sup>26</sup>Gregory Zilboorg, "Differential Diagnostic Types of Suicide," Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry, (1936), 270-291.

<sup>27</sup>I.R.C. Batchelor and M.B. Mapier, "Broken Homes and Suicide," British Journal of Delinquency (1954), 98-108.

<sup>28</sup>Albert Schrut, "Some Typical Patterns in the Behavior and Background of Female Adolescent Who Attempt Suicide," paper presented before the annual convention of the American Psychiatric Association, Detroit, 1967.

<sup>29</sup>Winnifred Wilson Waldron, "A Statistical Analysis of Suicide and Attempted Suicide in Selected Samples,"

### Death of a Parent as a Suicidal Predeterminant

As far back as 1937 Zilboorg<sup>30</sup> suggested that the death of a parent occurring early in a child's life pre-determines suicidal tendencies later in life, yet little consideration has been given this aspect of the high suicidal risk where such a history is known. This is surprising in view of the psychodynamics of suicide which have been explored by psychoanalytic theorists. For instance, Freud<sup>31</sup> viewed suicide as an act of aggression directed against a love object with which the patient had identified himself. According to some psychoanalytic theory, suicide is an act of self-punishment which springs from a sense of guilt about murderous impulses. When a parent dies or deserts the household either through divorce or separation, psychoanalytic literature is replete with studies in which it is reported that the child very frequently blames himself for this loss of the parent. With the high proportion of broken homes, death,

(Master's Thesis, Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1967).

<sup>30</sup> Gregory Zilboorg, "Considerations on Suicide With Particular Reference to That of the Young," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, VII (1937), 15-31.

<sup>31</sup> Sigmund Freud, Mourning and Melancholia (London: Hogarth, 1957), pp. 243-258.

alcoholism, and the mental institutionalization of a parent<sup>32</sup> found in the backgrounds of the majority of suicidal persons, it is apparent that the act of suicide is an extreme manifestation of aggression directed against the self because the "suicidal patient has identified with a person whom he loves and hates."<sup>33</sup>

The Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center and the "HELP NOW" operation at the Long Beach Memorial Hospital have gathered a vast amount of statistical data on persons who attempt suicide and from the families of those who are successful suicides in an attempt to learn more about suicide and its causes. Unfortunately, they have failed to include on "intake" what now appears yet another crucial factor in determining a suicidal possibility. With an increasing awareness of the importance of parental absence in the suicidal person's background, it is apparent that this question should be more thoroughly investigated at these and other centers of suicide prevention throughout the world. It should be listed as one of the significant clues along with long established clues such as age, sex, and other significant indicators of high suicidal potentiality.

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<sup>32</sup>Batchelor, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup>E. S. Shneidman and N. L. Farberow, Clues to Suicide (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), p. 13.

### Parental Suicide

Cain and Fast<sup>34</sup> point out that theoretical writings on suicide consistently omit the relevance of the children where successful suicides have occurred. "The potential pathological impact of parent suicide upon a child is obvious," they say. In their study of 32 boys and 13 girls, there were approximately twice as many fathers as mothers among the parent suicides. The male rate of suicide is about four times as great as female suicides. One hesitates to draw conclusions from this study. Waldron<sup>35</sup> found a higher percentage, however. She found that 6 out of 7 suicidal parents were fathers. This is too small a sample from which to draw conclusions. However, her study does indicate the direction further investigation may take.

### The Absent Father as a Suicidal Predeterminant

Referring to psychanalytic theory Fenichel quotes Freud in part:

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<sup>34</sup>Albert C. Cain and Irene Fast, "Children's Disturbed Reactions to Parent Suicide," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, (1966), 873-880.

<sup>35</sup>Winnifred Wilson Waldron, op. cit.

"The ego sees itself deserted by the superego and lets itself die."<sup>36</sup> To have a desire to live evidently means to feel a certain self-esteem, to feel supported by the protective forces of a superego. . . . Neurotically depressed children frequently have suicidal fantasies, the love-blackmailing tendency of which is obvious: "When I am dead the parents will regret what they have done to me and will love me again." When melancholic patients try to blackmail their cruel superego in a similar manner, they are worse off than children who court real parents capable of forgiveness and love.<sup>37</sup>

The present study has already discussed the importance the father takes in the development of the superego with the successful resolution of the Oedipal situation, as well as the father's importance after the age of twelve as a stabilizing factor in a faltering superego during adolescent acting out.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, when the importance of the superego is considered as important as it is in suicide by psychoanalytic theorists, together with the emerging evidence that the broken home, the absent father, and paternal suicide is much more pathogenic than heretofore assumed, it is not surprising that recent findings support what had hitherto been mere theory, yet for the most part overlooked.

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<sup>36</sup> Sigmund Freud, The Ego and the Id (London: Hogarth, 1927), as cited in Fenichel, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> Fenichel, op. cit., p. 400.

<sup>38</sup> See p. 114, this study.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CHURCH AND DIVORCE

Almighty God, our heavenly father. . . . We commend to thy continual care the homes in which thy people dwell. . . . Knit together in constant affection those who, in holy wedlock, have been made one flesh; turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers; and so enkindle fervent charity among us all, that we be evermore kindly affectioned with brotherly love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

This study has shown that a father's absence from his family has adverse effects upon his children. It was noted in the second chapter that divorce is a major cause of father absence, and thus, for this reason among others, becomes an increasing problem within our society.<sup>2</sup> The family (based on marriage) is the basic unit of society. Therefore, both the Church and State endeavor to keep families together. The first part of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the tools at our disposal for preventing the breakup of marriage and the family. The second part will focus attention

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<sup>1</sup>Book of Common Prayer, p. 598.

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 19, 23 and 24 of this paper.



upon divorce and the broken family and how the absent father may be restored to wholeness.

### 1. RECONCILIATION

The state has recognized the need for preserving family unity by providing counselors for couples on the brink of divorce. California, for instance, has established "Courts of Conciliation" in thirteen of its counties. This is an attempt to reconcile differences between estranged couples, especially those who have children under the age of eighteen. Los Angeles Superior Court has a staff of ten such counselors. This is a splendid effort in the right direction, but it is hardly adequate for dealing with the huge flow of divorces flooding through the courts.

#### The Church

Of all the agencies in the community, the church is the one institution which is uniquely suited for healing broken relationships and for picking up the pieces when the family is estranged. There are generally several churches in nearly every community. The clergyman has a position of advantage in marriage and divorce counseling which is not available to the secular counselor in quite the same way. The following are some of

these advantages. First, church-going couples in trouble are likely to go first to their pastor in an attempt to reconcile their differences. Second, many people without a church affiliation are drawn to the pastor who is known in the community as an understanding counselor. Third, many couples who would not ordinarily attend, have their marriages solemnized in church, and return to save their marriage. Fourth, the clergyman usually counsels with couples whom he has known. Having already established confidence and trust he saves valuable time in the counseling process. If he has solemnized the marriage, he has an added advantage of having given them pre-marital counseling.<sup>3</sup> Fifth, the clergyman is in a unique position to spot a troubled marriage long before its brokenness is irreconcilable and thus bring them into counseling in time to help rebuild the relationship into wholeness. Sixth, there are ecclesiastical tools which are uniquely useful within the church and for church oriented people only; e.g., confession and absolution, prayer, canons, sacraments and, Biblical injunctions and guidelines. In the minds of many within the community the church offers an emotionally conditioned

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<sup>3</sup>The Episcopal Church requires that all couples married by an Episcopal priest have a minimum of three pre-marital counseling sessions with the priest.

climate of trust which surrounds the office of the clergyman. The people's belief in God indicates that they have already accepted the idea that trust and reliance is placed elsewhere than upon themselves. The clergyman must employ these ecclesiastical tools at his discretion; they must not be used as manipulative devices simply in order to coerce a couple into staying married when the relationship is hopeless. Seventh, after every effort at reconciliation has been made and the marriage ends in divorce, the clergyman has an extended family in which to involve the broken family into a redemptive community. This last is particularly important, for even though a secular counselor may be (and often is) effective in rebuilding relationships, he must refer his counselees to some group within the community when he fails to bring about reconciliation. The clergyman has no such need to refer; the church is already there as a social setting of acceptance and redemption for the estranged family.

Beyond the use of these specific and practical tools which the clergyman has inherited with his job, there is a profound theological basis for placing the clergyman into the role of reconciler of broken relationships. Man's need for reconciliation and a reconciler is at the very core of a Christian understanding of the

nature of man and God. The whole drama of salvation is in the Christ-event. The cross is accepted as God's act of reconciling man to Himself. The church, then, as the Body of Christ, is a community of the redeemed who proclaim Christ as the mediator who has reconciled the broken relationship between God and man. The church (its people and ministers) therefore acts as a mediating agent which is charged with the task of bringing people to Christ, i.e., healing their brokenness with the "language of relationship,"<sup>4</sup> and forgiveness.

The theology of reconciliation is perhaps more generally understood when it is viewed traditionally from a Biblical perspective, for instance, the early chapters of the Old Testament describe in the form of myths the nature of man and God. They reveal a profound truth about man's predicament: the tension between good and evil. We learn from them that nothing is evil in and of itself, for all that God created is good.<sup>5</sup> The evil in man is his disobedience to God's will. Relationship, then, is the situation in which evil occurs. This evil aspect in man's intent to breach a loving relationship is called Sin. Traditional Christian theology affirms

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<sup>4</sup>Reuel Howe's term.

<sup>5</sup>Genesis 1:31.

that the Old Testament reveals the nature of man as a fallen creature, who by an inherited weakness to sin needed the Law of Moses to guide him until Christ came.<sup>6</sup> Whereas the Law deals only with guilty misdeeds, i.e., sins, Sin in a cosmic sense demanded a deed of divine grace, a sacrifice of sufficient value to atone for the Sin of mankind. Therefore, God in Christ died on the cross and rose again to redeem man, to relieve him of his fallen nature and the "curse of the Law."<sup>7</sup> As Saint Paul states it so succinctly: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself . . . entrusting the message of reconciliation."<sup>8</sup> The church, then--the Body of Christ--through its ministers and people, is entrusted with the message of reconciliation. It exists solely as a reconciling community to bring people to Christ.

Of all the figures of authority in the community, the clergyman is uniquely committed to preserving marriage and the family. Some are dedicated to maintaining family solidarity because it is prescribed in Holy Scripture. Thus, it is their avowed task to affirm the sanctity of marriage and the family as a Christian institution. Some are committed to using their influence

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<sup>6</sup>Galatians 3:24.

<sup>7</sup>Galatians 3:13.

<sup>8</sup>II Corinthians 5:19.

in the community and within their parishes to uphold marriage as a "holy and honorable estate, instituted of God, signifying . . . the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church."<sup>9</sup> The churches' stance in regard to preservation of marriage and the family goes beyond a mere political concern over the current divorce crisis because it weakens the fibres of our social fabric. The churches' concept of a covenant relationship with God is also intrinsic in the marriage contract. Marriage vows are exchanged between the couple, but they are voiced "in the sight of God and this company" and form a "mystical union" likened to that which exists between Christ and his Church.

In addition, there are fundamental Biblical and persuasive traditional precedents which undergird the clergyman's commitment to the preservation of family unity. For instance, the Biblical passage, "a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh,"<sup>10</sup> has dictated the churches' position regarding the sanctity, the solidarity and permanency of marriage as basic to the Judeo-Christian concept of social relations.

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<sup>9</sup>Book of Common Prayer, p. 300.

<sup>10</sup>Genesis 2:24.

For the Christian clergyman, the primacy of the family finds its chief support in the words and attitudes of Jesus. These have been incorporated into Christian thinking and partially into the social structure of the western world. Jesus sanctified the family and linked marriage and the home with the order of creation:

Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one?" So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.<sup>11</sup>

Christian marriage is based on this injunction: "what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." Within marriage, therefore, there are obligations and responsibilities as well as joys. Consequently all Christian churches discourage divorce or separation as being detrimental to the family as a whole. Some denominations, being more lenient toward divorce than others, argue that divorce is often preferable and in some cases the only solution to a bankrupt relationship. This will be taken up presently. Their reluctance to approve of divorce in a majority of cases reflects all churches' attitudes toward the unhealthy aspect which the broken family has upon its members and upon society.

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<sup>11</sup>Matthew 19:4-6.

## 2. DIVORCE

When a marriage has been broken in spite of every effort at forgiveness and reconciliation, what is the churches' and the clergyman's position and attitude in regard to divorce and the broken family?

As was pointed out earlier, Christian theology equates Sin with the breach which occurs in a loving relationship. Therefore, an overt act (such as adultery, murder, or theft) is simply the "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual" breaking of the loving relationship between God and man and man and his neighbor. The act of adultery, for instance, often occurs long after the breach in the relationship between man and wife has occurred, just as divorce occurs long after the man and wife have ceased to "love" one another. It is, therefore, the broken relationship which is sinful. If the broken relationship is repaired the act will not be committed. Here reconciliation and forgiveness are needed to circumvent the sinful and sometimes violent act. Here, the clergyman mediates and embodies the accepting and understanding love manifested in Christ. Here, God's love and forgiving grace is translated into human form through the clergyman-mediator and the redemptive community which is the Body of Christ. It is



from this point of view that the subject of divorce will not be treated.

Divorce is defined here as simply a legal recognition of a broken relationship which existed prior to its being legally concluded. As was stated earlier, it is only within the human relationship that evil is possible. Because the broken relationship occurs before the divorce, it is the broken relationship which is evil, not the divorce itself. Many "marriages" which are preserved by the coercive pressure of the church are not marriages at all. In fact, such "marriages," from this point of view, are thus more sinful than divorce would be. This does not mean that divorce is to be encouraged just because there is a broken relationship between man and wife. Every effort should be made to rebuild the relationship.

All marriages exist under some degree of tension--all relationships do because the potential for evil is inherent in every relationship--therefore, marriage as a social institution must be supported and reinforced extrinsically by both political and ecclesiastical law. But some persons fail to reconcile their differences; they do terminate their marriage in divorce. When a marriage has been broken in spite of every effort at forgiveness and reconciliation, what is the churches'

position regarding the broken family?

### The Broken Family

Liberal churches consider the psychic damages to members of a "preserved" but unhappy marriage often to be greater than the effects of divorce, even greater than the effects of an absent father would be. The author agrees with this position. He also agrees with some churches which forbid divorce, but only for those reasons which will become apparent later in the chapter when the Episcopal church's attitude in regard to divorce and remarriage is discussed. He does not agree with churches who excommunicate members of the divorced family. Excommunication imposed as a punitive measure and in order to preserve the marriages of its members, especially for those who are "innocent" victims of a divorce situation, opposes the spirit of forgiveness of God as demonstrated by Jesus.

Because the family of father, mother and children is the norm in our society, social stigma often attaches to the child of divorced or separated parents. The child is innocent in the true sense of the word for he is merely a victim of his parent's conflicts and broken relationship, yet he often feels alien and inferior. The child has learned to understand that the normal

family has a mother and father living together. The child of a broken home feels a "difference" about him which sets him apart from other children. This is not only experienced at school and in other aspects of the community, but the church which rigidly forbids divorce further condemns the child by implication. There is little comfort for the child when the church takes the attitude that the "parents should have thought of the child before they got divorced." Often many concerned parents get a divorce to save the child from the emotional cross-fire of their marital battlefield. As was pointed out earlier in the study, a child may often feel that he has contributed to his parent's separation, but the community's attitude toward divorce and separation, particularly the churches', tends to reinforce the guilt all members of the broken family may feel. Furthermore, the innocent child of such a divorced family who is made to feel like an outcast by his church but does not know why, suffers a kind of anxiety which may bother him all through his life. There is security in knowing why one feels guilty, just as a specific fear (phobic reaction) is often more easily defended against than a pervasive one simply because it is identified and thereafter avoided. Perhaps this is one of the reasons some persons who are excommunicated from their

church find a haven in a fanatic cult. Often in such a setting, it will satisfy a neurotic need to have fears and guilts objectified into identifiable patterns so that they may be "appropriately" dealt with. When objectified, they may then be forgiven.

Many divorced persons become so embittered by the narrow dogmatism of the structured church that they deny the efficacy of all church bodies, and cannot see that there are other churches which offer them redemption and spiritual restoration. Often they find far greater comfort in an organization such as Parents Without Partners than in the church which has cast them out, or in the church whose members do not accept them. At least, they reason, in such an organization as PWP (which is purposely non-denominational and often even self-consciously non-religious) they are accepted and not condemned. They are not treated as unforgiven sinners which they feel when excommunicated from their church. In other words, many people reject all churches because "church" has in fact rejected them. They have been given a stone instead of a loaf, and being let down by the one authority which professes redemption and forgiveness for the sinner but fails to give it, they react in anger and fling the stone of rejection in protest against the already broken Body of Christ. Some are forced to seek

redemption from a secular source because of a loyalty to the church of their youth which for many subjective reasons will not allow them to seek succor in another branch of the Christian church.

### Remarriage of Divorced Persons

What is the position of the church in regard to divorced persons who want to get remarried? Most of the orthodox churches forbid remarriage of divorced persons. The more liberal churches will perform the marriage ceremony of divorced persons. The position of the author is that there are circumstances in which the remarriage of divorced persons is not only permissible but should be encouraged. Some people, however, should never be remarried, probably for the same reason that they should not have been married in the first place. The pastor should discourage the remarriage of all poor marriage "risks."

Man needs to live in a loving relationship in which he finds fulfillment of the total man. Our society has upheld the family as the situation in which this total loving relationship is found and given. The children stand in need of a father, the mother in need of a husband. Some divorced persons are not emotionally, mentally or spiritually prepared after divorce to enter

into a relationship in which this kind of total giving of self is necessary. Some divorced persons, on the other hand, are prepared and ready to begin the risk of relationship.

On Scriptural grounds, however, the remarriage of divorced persons is in opposition to the express command of Jesus.<sup>12</sup> An appeal is, therefore, made to the spirit of the total message of Jesus rather than being held to the Marcan injunction. Implicit in the life and death of Jesus is God's disposition to forgive the sinner. Thus, God's forgiveness must be applied to all who have sinned and turn to the Body of Christ as a community of the redeemed to have God's forgiveness demonstrated in the language of acceptance within the Church.

In agreement with the author's understanding of God's forgiveness, Karl Barth states that "the Church being the place and the means of God's glory and the human salvation until Christ's return, the last three assertions [of the Creed]--forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the flesh, life everlasting--describe the work of God in mankind."<sup>13</sup> In response to what he means by

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<sup>12</sup>Mark 10:10. The Matthean passages (Matthew 5: 32; 19:8 and 9) are considered by textual scholars to be an editorial softening of the specific injunction of Jesus

<sup>13</sup>Karl Barth, The Faith of the Church (New York: Meridian, 1958), p. 150.

the word forgiveness, Barth states:

God by his gratuitous goodness forgives and pardons the faithful their sins, so that they are not summoned to judgement nor is punishment exacted from them. . . . For Christ alone, by paying the penalty, made satisfaction. As for us, no compensation from our side procures what we have from God: we receive this benefit gratuitously out of his sheer liberality.<sup>14</sup>

When asked why he "subjoins the forgiveness of sins to the Church," he states:

Because no one obtains it, unless he has previously been united with the people of God, cultivates this unity with the body of Christ up to the end, and thus testifies that he is a true member of the Church.<sup>15</sup>

This reasoning, when applied to the divorced family which seeks forgiveness within the Church, would suggest that a churches' failure to accept the divorced family into a forgiving community of redeemed persons, fails to manifest the redemptive purpose of the body of Christ.

Attention is now drawn to the Gospels in an understanding of the forgiveness of God. God chose to provide a human expression for manifesting his forgiveness. He shows this in Christ. This aspect of forgiveness is also embodied in man. Jesus' forgiveness of sins is reported time and time again in the Gospels.

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

In accounts in which he cures sickness and physical infirmities, he repeatedly states that sins are forgiven, and thus the person is restored to wholeness. His contemporaries felt that illness was an indication of God's punishment for sin or sins committed. When an illness was no longer and the person was restored to health, it was assumed that the debt had been paid and God had forgiven the sinner his sin. Jesus does not specifically deny this contemporary attitude toward illness and sin; he accepted the world-view of the people in the culture of which they were a product. In other words, he was a part of their world, therefore, he advised people to live within the Jewish system.

In Matthew, for instance, the leper came to him and said:

"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." And he stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will, be cleaned." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to the people."<sup>16</sup>

Here Jesus advised the leper to adhere to Levitic Law,<sup>17</sup> by ordering him to show himself to the priest, make the accepted gift that Moses commanded, and be

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<sup>16</sup>Matthew 8:2-4.

<sup>17</sup>Leviticus 14:2f.



declared "clean," i.e., to have his "sins" publicly pronounced as being forgiven by God. But for the contemporaries of Jesus forgiveness was God's prerogative, and for a mere man to forgive sins was considered blasphemy. Therefore, the ultimate human expression of God's forgiveness is demonstrated by the cross itself. The meaning of the cross, other than that of reconciling man to God, was that it was a once-for-all event which wiped away the need for sacrifice as the condition on which God's forgiveness hinged. As Jesus hung on the cross his acceptance of the thief is a demonstration of God's forgiveness through Christ for him who asks for it.<sup>18</sup>

What was so significantly striking about Jesus was that when people had gone against the Jewish system, he forgave them. For instance, when they brought the paralytic to him he said:

"Take heart my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?' But that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth

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<sup>18</sup> Luke 23:42 & 43.

to forgive sins"--he then said to the paralytic--  
 "Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose  
 and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were  
 afraid and they glorified God, who had given such  
 authority to men.<sup>19</sup>

In other words, the authority to forgive sins was  
 ultimately with God, but the spirit of God's forgiveness  
 was manifested in and through the Son of Man. The  
 specific injunction given by Jesus regarding forgiveness  
 is unmistakably clear in the following:

Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge  
 not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and  
 you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be  
 forgiven.<sup>20</sup>

The way the author understands the theology of  
 forgiveness is demonstrated in the way Jesus (as God  
 incarnate) took each person where and as he was. He  
 urged conformance to the Laws of the Jewish system. He  
 voiced certain injunctions which were intended to be  
 guidelines, but when a person went against that system,  
 he forgave the transgressor.

Therefore, when a couple, one or both of whom have  
 been divorced, come to the church for worship and fellow-  
 ship, the forgiving nature of Jesus should be manifested  
 in their treatment by all members of the church. They are  
 thereby brought to Christ.

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<sup>19</sup> Matthew 9:2-8.

<sup>20</sup> Luke 6:36-37, see also Matthew 18:21-22.

There are clergymen and denominations which do not subscribe to this interpretation of the forgiveness of God when specifically applied to the Markan injunction. Therefore, the question of remarrying divorced persons is one which each clergyman must answer for himself, even if his denomination officially allows its ministers to do so. As in any decision of this sort, the clergyman does have the prerogative to refuse to marry a couple (whether or not they have never been married before) if, in his estimation, they are a poor marriage risk. But in the opinion of many clergymen (the author included) to condemn a second marriage as adultery and thereby close them out of the church is to contravene the spirit of Jesus and make his words a legalism that is incompatible with his total message.

### Redemption

Many people who come to the pastor for help may have had a lifetime of church participation and yet, display a shallow theological understanding. Traditional religious concepts are often rudimentary and distorted. Still, they seek out the pastor in their confusion, despair and guilt. This is fortunate because the clergyman-counselor is equipped to deal with these perplexing questions as they occur in the counseling process. The

forgiveness to assuage a counselee's unmitigating guilt. Absolution is a powerful asset in which one of the members or both has committed adultery and needs to forgive himself by being forgiven by God through the priest-mediator. Absolution is also helpful therapeutically when every effort at reconciliation has failed and divorce is the only answer. The secular counselor must spend many hours of counseling time in an effort to eliminate feelings of guilt which occur as a result of divorce.<sup>21</sup> Rarely does the secular counselor have such an opportunity to counsel with any member of the family after the divorce has occurred. The clergyman, on the other hand, often continues counseling with the broken family and is able to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives, restoring them to wholeness and alleviating their guilts, as well as incorporating them into the redemptive community of the church, long after the divorce has become final.

Persons who are victims of divorce, who suffer from existential anxiety and guilt, often despair and seek neurotic escapes. According to Tillich, the alternative to such despair and neurotic escape is--

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<sup>21</sup> Guilt and its treatment is taken up in the next chapter.

courage--courage to take existential anxiety into oneself, the courage to affirm oneself, the courage to be.<sup>22</sup>

The approach described by Tillich is particularly appealing to the Protestant minister. It offers a direction for him to follow in ministering to him who is alienated, excommunicated, alone. Tillich believes that existential anxiety is not mainly the concern of the physician who must treat the neurotic psychotherapeutically; it is also the concern of the "minister as a minister."<sup>23</sup>

Usually, a person experiences a loss of direction, a "lack of intentionality,"<sup>24</sup> when he is alienated from his former spouse, his family, his community and his church. The resultant anxiety and guilt must be alleviated if he is ever to be brought to Christ, i.e., made whole again. As Tillich suggests, the alienated person must be given new direction. Some churches fail to do this in their treatment of divorced families. They remove the support of the extended family at a time when they need it the most. This rejection is further

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 66.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

accentuated by the fact that the divorce court treats the "guilty" party as a criminal. The pastor, therefore, must help the divorced person to affirm his own being, to assert his identity and personal autonomy despite elements in his own personality and in his world that conflict with such a self-affirmation. Each member of the broken family who is thus affirmed, is better adjusted emotionally to respond to the father's absence in a healthier way.

The Protestant church then, its ministers and people, are in a position to offer to such a person and family the redemption, reconciliation and forgiveness that the church is supposed to give. Some churches are shackled by canon law which impedes a positive approach for dealing with divorced persons. The following suggests how this may be dealt with.

The author is an Episcopal priest. He is particularly concerned about his denomination's attitude in regard to divorce and remarriage. The Episcopal Church is orthodox in regard to divorce and remarriage. Its canon law forbids a divorced person from receiving the sacraments, and neither may Episcopal priests perform a marriage if either of the two persons was previously divorced unless it is approved by the official marriage commission of the church. Despite this

canonical restriction, some Episcopal priests (the author included) get around this ancient canon by first counseling with the couple who are contemplating remarriage (either of whom may be divorced) by using this opportunity to assess the sincerity, the depth of their intentions, and the possibility of a successful marriage. Finding that they are a "good marriage risk," he may suggest that they have their (the divorced person's) case reviewed by the marriage commission--this sometimes takes a year or more--or he may suggest that they get married by a sympathetic minister whose church allows him to marry divorced persons. Indirectly, he gives his, if not the Church's, official blessing to the marriage, and by so doing does not reject them and close them out. He receives them into the fellowship of the redeemed where the new union is dignified by accepting them as worthy of being maintained as a married couple. For a period of a year or so after their marriage the priest may continue to counsel with them, and at the end of such time, if in his estimation the marriage is valid and they are compatible, he may write a letter to the bishop asking that they be considered candidates to receive full benefit of the sacraments of the church. In other words, the couple are made members in good standing of the church; they receive the

blessing of the church for their union; they are twice born. Usually, the bishop will issue such a consideration.

In the case of a couple contemplating divorce, the canon forbidding divorce is a useful device in buying time in which the priest may enter into counseling with the couple. The priest may impose the canon as a means of exploring every avenue for repairing the impaired relationship. Perhaps if the priest feels unqualified because he feels he lacks the necessary training to undertake such an extensive counseling process, he may suggest that they go to a qualified marriage counselor or psychotherapist in hope that reconciliation may be accomplished through the skill of his particular training. The subject of referral will be taken up presently. If, after an effort has been made to reconcile their differences, and it is his considered decision that they are better off apart, he may then prepare the way for the whole family to continue counseling. Readjustments may then be made, responsibilities specified, and the ground-work is laid for the healthy well-being of the family when it is determined that divorce is the only solution to an intolerable situation. Thus, the whole family is still within reach of the church and they are not cast adrift. The priest is there to counsel with



each member of the divorced family. How this may be done is taken up in detail in the next chapter.

Perhaps the churches which are adamant about divorce and remarriage, may adopt the method suggested by the author while the law remains on the books. In other words, they may adopt the spirit rather than the letter, thereby achieving the primary purpose of the church as the reconciler of the broken in spirit, in heart, and in relationship.

In all probability the Episcopal Church will eventually allow divorce and remarriage as the more liberal Protestant churches have, but a strong argument for not doing so (at least at present) is that the present restrictions offer an excellent opportunity for a reappraisal of the marriage situation. The couple contemplating divorce may not rush into it until all avenues for treatment are explored. If divorce is agreed upon they are still kept within the church family, the priest is still in contact with the divorced family, and the persons involved do not have the feeling that they have been deserted by their church.

The task is easier for the more liberal churches in dealing with divorced families and remarriage. It is officially allowed and consequently, there is less control or concern with social condemnation of the action of

divorce and remarriage by its members. The leniency of the official position implies redemption. A climate of acceptance has been created within the church family by official action; the minister (by assuming a position which is in opposition to church policy) does not have to create this atmosphere unsupported by the authorities.

The following chapter deals with how the church and the minister may deal with the problem of the absent father and his family. The conclusions, which have been drawn from the studies reviewed in the earlier chapters of the study, will be used for acquainting him and his people with the need for a therapeutic-redemptive approach within the church in dealing with the problem of the absent father. Before this, however, the question of referral will be discussed.

#### Referral to A Secular Counselor

Often the clergyman feels unqualified to counsel with a couple on the brink of divorce. There are many subjective reasons why a clergyman may so disqualify himself. There may be transference and/or counter-transference problems. He may feel uncomfortable about one or both of the people or about himself. One or both of them may be emotionally unstable, and he is afraid to tackle the task of reconciling for fear that his lack of

training will further damage the relationship. In such cases, the clergyman should not hesitate to refer, but to whom?

Thomas Oden is helpful in this. He states that without the "Mediation and embodiment" of Jesus Christ in the counseling process "Psychotherapy simply does not work."<sup>25</sup> This applies to all psychotherapy whether or not the practitioner is a Christian or a non-Christian. He says that "effective psychotherapy mediates and embodies the unconditional acceptance and understanding love present in being itself, which Christian proclamation announces as a once-for-all event in Jesus Christ."<sup>26</sup>

The author takes issue only with the phrase "unconditional acceptance" because man's judgment inhibits the mediation of God's unconditional acceptance. Other than this objection, however, the author agrees entirely with Oden that the love that was manifested in Christ must be present in the therapeutic process for it to be effective. Furthermore, the secular therapist is quite often effective in helping "broken people into wholeness, overcoming many forms of guilt, anxiety and

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<sup>25</sup>Thomas C. Oden, Contemporary Theology and Psychotherapy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967),

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

meaninglessness which were once thought to have only a religious solution."<sup>27</sup> For the clergyman to claim that Christ's Grace is not possible in the secular counseling process is to say that the power of the Holy Spirit is not working at the center of all things. The reality of Jesus Christ can be present in the secular therapeutic process whether Christ is "proclaimed" or not. Indeed, in the counseling process, Christ is more often than not proclaimed in terms of relationship than in mere words. Love, in the agapian sense, is transmitted through the acceptance which the counselor has for the counselee. Christ is proclaimed in the counselor's positive regard for the personhood of the counselee. He accepts the "unacceptable"; he loves the "unlovable." He does not talk about his love; he is love. Obviously, no therapist is ever able to love in the sense that Jesus was able to love, but the more he is able to love in the agapian sense the more effective he is as a counselor. Of course, all this applies to the clergyman-counselor as well as for the secular psychotherapist. In fact, for the clergyman to "proclaim" Christ to a counselee who is not receptive to the Word (if spoken in religious terms, or in terms he does not understand) would be a deterrent to effective counseling. To "preach the Word" to an unreceptive counselee would inhibit the therapeutic process

and defeat the purpose of the proclamation. In other words, for a clergyman-counselor to thus proclaim Christ (in the preaching sense) is the very opposite from demonstrating the "mediating and embodying" of Christ in the counseling process. In such a case it would be better for the clergyman to refer to a secular therapist who is able to proclaim the reality of Christ in terms of relationship, which is what the whole process of counseling is all about.

It is likely that if the secular therapist is successful in bringing about reconciliation in an estranged couple, then the reality of Christ is present in the counseling process. Even if reconciliation is not accomplished it does not mean the reality of Christ is not present anymore than it is when the clergyman-counselor fails to bring about reconciliation. It has been the experience of the author that when he has referred persons to a secular counselor, the therapist has never attempted to change the religious concepts of the referred counselees. To do so would be to dry up a referral source. But beyond this, what purpose would it serve to destroy a person's faith? It is wise, however, for the clergyman to keep in contact with the referred couple and the therapist during the time of counseling. The therapist is generally cooperative about this.

If the referred couple do not reconcile, then the church as the redemptive community accepts them in their brokenness and mediates and embodies the reality of Christ in terms of relationship within the Body of Christ. The primary reason for keeping in touch with the referred couple, is that they will be less likely to interpret the referral as a rejection by the clergyman and the church.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PASTOR AND THE ABSENT FATHER

It has been made clear in this study that the absence of a father may have seriously adverse effects on all members of a broken family. Now it has become equally clear that his presence in an unworkable marriage may have the same or sometimes even greater disadvantages. This apparent paradox requires considerable thought on the part of the pastor in counseling families or members of a family in these unfortunate circumstances. It is obvious that some marriages do fail. Certainly the pastor must recognize this fact. Wherever physical or mental injury of a child or youth or adult occurs in an unhappy marriage, divorce should not only be possible but desirable. It is essential, however, that the pastoral counselor point out the effects an absent father may have on the broken family members, particularly the children, if the parents persist in the idea of divorce. At the same time, of course, consideration must be given to the problems that have caused the family to consider divorce in the first place. In this way the ultimate decision may be based on the better of the two alternatives. Thus the value of this study for a counselor (marriage, family

or otherwise) is that it focuses attention on the less well known effects of an absent father. It adds another dimension to counseling.

### A Child's Guilt Over Father Loss

The child who suffers a father loss when the Oedipal conflicts are at their most active stage (around the age of six, and again around the age of twelve) is likely to experience feelings of guilt.<sup>1</sup> The boy wishes to replace the father, and the girl wishes to replace the mother. Each child may even wish for the death of the same-sexed parent.<sup>2</sup> If there is a father loss due to death, divorce, separation, or desertion, the boy may perceive the father's loss as a fulfillment of his wish to eliminate the father. The daughter may perceive the father's loss as a punishment for her wanting to possess the father and take the mother's place.<sup>3</sup>

The Oedipal situation is only one of the reasons children experience feelings of guilt over father loss,

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<sup>1</sup>See page 48 of this study.

<sup>2</sup>Otto Fenichel, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York: Norton, 1945), p. 395.

<sup>3</sup>John G. McKenzie, Guilt: Its Meaning and Significance (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 33.



however. The norm of our society for a family unit is that there be a mother, father and children. Children sense the incompleteness of a broken family. In a broken or divorced family, frequently a child feels he must choose between his mother and father. "Whether or not parents foster this feeling, most children of six, seven or older seem pressured into making a choice . . ."<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, many mothers and fathers--openly or subconsciously--do want their children to make a choice between them.<sup>5</sup> The youngster, sensing that he must make such a choice, experiences feelings of anxiety, discomfort, and guilt.

During the pre-adolescent and teen years youngsters form cliques. Where there is an "in group" there are bound to be "outsiders." An outsider is a child or person who is "different" from others. In a great many urban communities divorce is so common as to be accepted without shock or indignation, but "there are small towns and even big city neighborhoods where divorce or separation are virtually unknown."<sup>6</sup> In such communities, neighborhoods and churches which rigidly forbid divorce

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<sup>4</sup> Jim and Janet Egleson, Parents Without Partners (New York: Ace Books, 1961), p. 140

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

the child of divorced parents is likely to feel an outsider. Therefore, the internalized guilt experienced is further intensified from without by negative cultural attitudes regarding divorce.

### The Parent's Guilt

Widows frequently experience feelings of guilt over the death of their husbands. As is so often the case in society when a member of a family dies, the survivors do not feel that they are responsible for the death, but often regret the moments of neglect and hostile feelings they had toward the deceased. A widow, particularly, feels guilty over what she might have done or what she failed to do while her husband was still alive.

A divorced, separated, or deserted woman similarly feels guilt.<sup>7</sup> Stewart says:

The wife . . . has her feelings of success as a person bound up in whether she succeeds as a wife and a mother. . . . She suffers considerable loss of esteem in her own eyes . . . [and] . . . loss of status in the eyes of friends. Though divorce is being increasingly recognized as a social matter, to become divorced means that one loses friends who have been formed mutually by both husband and wife.

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<sup>7</sup> Samuel H. Lerner, "Effects of Desertion on Family Life," Social Casework, XXXV (1945), 3-8.

Too, one loses friends who do not approve of the divorce action itself. . . . Beneath her bitterness is guilt at her failure to measure up as a wife.<sup>8</sup>

When she has reconciled herself to the divorce and her intense feelings of hostility have diminished, the divorcé experiences guilt because of "what might have been" had she acted differently to save their marriage "for the children's sake."

Similarly, the divorced father also loses self-esteem. He experiences considerable guilt over having failed as a husband. He further experiences guilt because he has lessened his opportunity to serve as a father now that he no longer lives under the same roof with his children. His guilt is intensified by the pain of loneliness and separation from his children.

### Dealing With Guilt

When a member or members of a broken family come to the church, if the church is to be the redemptive community it purports to be, then the pastor must first be an instrument of God's forgiveness in absolving the fallen. He must be the head of the extended family who takes the broken family in and repairs their brokenness

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<sup>8</sup> Charles W. Stewart, The Minister as Marriage Counselor (New York: Abingdon Press, 1961), p. 122.

with acceptance and concern. The pastor's attitude in this one area may well reflect the total thrust of his ministry in the cure of souls. The pastor's main problem, beyond this, is getting his members to accept the broken family into the church family.

When a person marries he does so with the full intent of staying that way until death, otherwise it is not a valid marriage and should not have been entered into in the first place. If a person has deep feelings regarding divorce, and feels guilty in breaking his vow with God, the pastor must not reassure at this point; he must accept the feeling and help the person to verbalize it.

Counseling after divorce is similar to grief work which a pastor does after the death of a loved one. A marriage has died, and both parties react to this loss as though they were bereaved. The pastor allows the intense feelings of hostility to be expressed. Each is allowed to relive past episodes and to reconstruct how they were resolved, until as in grief work, the divorcee can lay aside and close the door on this phase of life. Each must be made aware of his share in the guilt, and in order to forgive one must first be forgiven. Since the husband (or wife) is gone, the forgiveness is mediated through the pastor's acceptance, and each is thus made

aware of the forgiveness of God.<sup>9</sup>

Counseling with the child of an absent father, especially between the ages of seven and eleven, is difficult because the child's feelings are often repressed.<sup>10</sup> These are the "gang" years. He does not reveal his feelings so readily as he does in his earlier years. He spends most of his free time with other youngsters his age. However, once the child's confidence has been secured, his feelings come out easily. If the pastor is acquainted with the child through church school or a church group, he may have an advantage over another professional worker who must take several sessions to gain the child's confidence. Once this confidence has been secured the child may reveal that he feels abandoned by his father. He feels angry.<sup>11</sup> Often he loses respect for and trust in the adult world. The pastor allows this anger toward a male adult to be expressed. He accepts it, and his acceptance bridges the gap between the child's world and the adult world. Guilt over his anger for being abandoned by a male adult is assuaged. The

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>10</sup>Egleson, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>11</sup>Stewart, op. cit., p. 125.

anger is drained away.

Counseling with the adolescent is also difficult. At this stage the child without a father has other problems which further complicate the task for the counselor.

[At] this stage . . . emerge responses of guilt and shame; guilt deriving particularly from conflicted sexual temptations and aggressive impulses.<sup>12</sup>

Ackerman warns that the adolescent's characteristic mistrust of adults, his shift of allegiance to his peers, his egocentricity, evasiveness, and belligerence makes the task of establishing rapport more difficult.<sup>13</sup>

However, when the child knows that the pastor is on his side, that he feels his emotional pain, that the pastor's offering of warmth, interest, and affection are given genuinely, the child accepts the pastor's acceptance. He is understood. He is forgiven for his frequent aggressive reactions to anxiety which are tearing him apart. He learns of God's love and forgiveness as expressed in human terms--in terms he can understand. In other words, the pastor is an example of the church's

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<sup>12</sup> Nathan W. Ackerman, The Psychodynamics of Family Life (New York: Basic Books, 1958), p. 219.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 289-290.

redemptive function. But in order to function effectively he must understand his people and their attitudes which intrude upon their functioning as extensions of the redemptive aspect of the church. First of all, the pastor must realize that women are suspicious of the divorced woman, especially if she is attractive. She becomes a possible rival. He must, therefore, select from among his flock those members who are secure in their marriages. If he knows his people well, as he should, he may counsel with them separately or in a group explaining to them the plight of the divorcee, and her possible aloneness, separateness, guilts, and feelings of being an outcast, a "fifth wheel." He may suggest to them that they can extend a warm welcome to the divorced woman and make her feel comfortable as an accepted member of the parish. They support her by accepting her as one of them. Through them is the redemption of God expressed. They are the extended family.

#### 1. THE PASTOR AS A MASCULINE MODEL

The role of the pastor is a complex one, for many of his congregation he represents a father figure. In the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and some Episcopal churches he is addressed as "father," whereas in most Protestant churches he is addressed as "pastor" or merely "mister."

Despite what the pastor is called he is a masculine figure of some importance. To some he is an authority figure, one who is respected in the community.

The pastor, therefore, is in an ideal position to become a masculine model for children at all developmental stages. He can become a meaningful masculine figure in the lives of children who lack a father. Because of the nature of his position he has more freedom to visit the homes of fatherless children than non-relative male figures in the community, such as a teacher. He is in a position to include the children into church activities at all age levels and teach the children to relate to him on a shared basis with other children. If he establishes a close personal relationship with the child, having occasional person-to-person talks with him on an informal basis, the pastor will not only be serving a needed purpose, but will share a reciprocal "feedback" of affection that will more than reward him for his "time" taken from his already busy schedule. Of particular value in the pastor's relationship with the child is that it may last for many years, whereas a meaningful relationship with a teacher usually lasts less than a year.

One clergyman of the author's acquaintance has spent his ministry primarily as a substitute father for



the children of broken homes. The associate rector of All Saints Church, Beverly Hills, California, the Reverend Kermit ("K. C.") Castellanos, has remained in his position since 1949 despite attractive calls to other churches in order to fulfill his role as a substitute father in one of the highest divorce rate areas in America. Many adults who have come under his "cure" when they were growing up without fathers living at home, refer to him with deep affection as one would to a loving and loved father. "K.C." is a substitute father in the ideal sense.

## 2. COUNSELING WITH MEMBERS OF THE BROKEN HOME

The balance of this chapter will deal with the role of the clergyman as a counselor to all members of a broken home, including the "absent father." Recommendations and suggestions that will be made are based on the conclusions drawn from the studies which have been reviewed and evaluated in the foregoing chapters. This concluding portion is intended to provide a practical summary of conclusions which may be helpful to the pastor in counseling families in which an absent father occurs.

### A. Counseling With the Children

There is not much "counseling a pastor can do with the children of an absent father until they reach the latency period. Before then the pastor may become a consultant masculine model to whom the children may relate. His presence will prepare them for the time when they may regard him as a friend to be trusted, and with whom they may feel free to tell their troubles.

As was shown earlier in discussing the latency period, it was concluded that even when the father is present, a teacher or another same-sexed figure takes an important place in the child's esteem.<sup>14</sup> The absence of a father at this time would intensify the need for the child to seek masculine companionship. This period offers an excellent opportunity for the pastor to become a meaningful masculine figure in the life of a boy who lacks a father. The same degree of identification is probably not possible with the female child at this time. He may become, however, a significant non-incestuous authority figure for the girl to relate to during the Oedipal period. The pastor may also be available in an "active listening" role in dealing with the little

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<sup>14</sup>  
See pages 68 and 69.

girl. This is especially possible if a close personal relationship has already been established between them prior to her entering this period.

During adolescence the pastor may become an especially important figure for both sexes. According to psychoanalytic theory the child who has not successfully resolved the Oedipal conflict is likely to suffer a weak superego. Clinebell says:

They have not internalized the culture's major values and therefore, have not learned to control their impulses. Such "character problems" sometimes stem from homes where weak parents mistook permissiveness for love and were unable to maintain stable limits or dependable discipline. Many others come from barren, loveless homes or from homes with a physically or emotionally absent father.<sup>15</sup>

Clinebell suggests that the minister represents the value structure of the community, and for children whose inner controls or consciences are underdeveloped, it is he who must set limits for them. The pastor therefore helps the adolescent establish his own constructive limits.

Counseling with an adolescent should be conducted on an easy, informal basis. This is done in order to make him as comfortable as possible. The pastor is in a

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<sup>15</sup> Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Mental Health Through Christian Community (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 232.

position to do this if he allows the church facilities to be used as a meeting place for teenagers to hang out.

With the absence of a father during adolescence a child is likely to find outside support and security in gangs. The pastor is presented with some problems in the suburban church, however. For instance, in suburbia teen agers tend to act out as do teen agers in under-privileged areas. The acting out takes different forms. The suburban church is a symbol of the "Establishment" for many young people. It is likely to be the last place where adolescents would hang out. The minister of such a church is presented with the problem of selling the idea not only to the children that they are welcome to use the church facilities for holding meetings and other activities, but he must sell the "respectable" adult members of the church that the church facilities will not be improperly used by them. Teen agers being what they are are likely to "abuse" privileges. They may experiment with smoking, drinking and now that there is an increase in the use of marijuana, LSD, and "speed," they may be tempted to use the confines of the fellowship hall, classrooms and the like for the privacy they afford.

Ackerman suggests that the counselor of adolescents assume a strongly supportive role.

He is required by the adolescent's need to be a direct parent substitute. Through the feeling of protection which the adolescent derives from this relationship, he is encouraged to face the anxiety that he feels in expanding experiences and relationships. It is important for the therapist continuously to counteract potential threats of injury to the patient's self-esteem and thus carefully guard the adolescent's personal pride.<sup>16</sup>

Ackerman further recommends group therapy as a supplement to individual counseling. Group work is useful for working out conflicts through identification with other adolescents. He feels that the group consist of from eight to ten adolescents. He favors a group situation because it provides a spontaneous interaction process quite different from that provided by individual counseling. However, for the adolescent without a father, individual counseling on an on-going basis, even if it is only once or twice a month, tends to establish a needed and consistent relationship with an adult male figure. The pastor is in an ideal position to assume this role, but it is not without its problems.

For instance, the rector of the church where the author is presently assisting is constantly confronted with disgruntled parishioners who deplore the "misuse" of the church facilities by the teen agers. He is constantly

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<sup>16</sup> Ackerman, op. cit., p. 290. (Underscoring this author's.)

having to defend his open invitation to teenagers to congregate in the afternoons and evenings for fellowship. Most of the youngsters have no church affiliation whatever. They are variously called "The Rat Pack," "Community Drop-outs," and "Over-privileged delinquents." Most of these children come from wealthy or near wealthy families, in which their fathers have spent most of their time "absent" from their families in pursuit of material things. Many of these boys and girls are in trouble with the police, the schools, and are being rejected by their parents who have given up on them because they have not lived up to their expectations of them. The rector has established rapport with these young people and they trust him enough that he is about the only person in the community to whom these youngsters can turn. He is adamant about his position on the matter, feeling it is his Christian duty to fulfill his role as a pastor to these unwanted children, but his job hangs in the balance.

Someday, when these youngsters outgrow their adolescence and become responsible adults, they will likely remember that it was the church that stood up for them when they needed help most, and they will undoubtedly become the Christian church of the future.

It must be pointed out, however, that the rector, whom the author is presenting as an example of how the

pastor may use his position and the church to fulfill a much needed function in the community, is in no way permissive about their behavior. He will tolerate no stupid or illegal behavior, and the youngsters respect the limits he sets for them. Both he and the author counsel with both the youngsters and with their parents. Our primary "philosophy" in our counseling with the youngsters is based on Glasser's basic position: that a troubled person suffers from the inability "to fulfill his essential personality needs."<sup>17</sup> For Glasser, persons need "to love and be loved and the need to feel that [they] are worthwhile to [themselves] and to others."<sup>18</sup> People need "to be involved with people."<sup>19</sup> In counseling with parents with adolescent "problem children," we follow Glasser's approach to discipline.

Through discipline tempered with love, parents must teach their children to behave better. The child learns thereby that the parents care.

Children want to become responsible, but they won't accept discipline and learn better ways unless they feel the parents care enough to show them actively the responsible way to behave.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> William Glasser, Reality Therapy (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

It has been our experience that some parents "couldn't care less." Therefore, if our attempt to get parents to accept the responsibility for disciplining their children--beyond an angry "get your goddam hair cut!" or "you're not going to wear that, are you?"--we must show our "care" for them.

There is an inherent danger here, and we recognize it, and that is that the more we "care" the more they are likely to feel that their parents do not "care" for them. It must be pointed out, however, that some parents really do not care enough to change. They have virtually given up. We are dealing with children in "crisis." We try to fill the need, and sometimes we succeed. Some of these young people have "put down" the use of drugs and are gradually influencing the other "users" in the neighborhood to do the same. In the opinion of the author, although many of the users of drugs rationalize their use by advocating the efficacy of them in helping them to solve their problems, the initial need to resort to drugs is an escape from their problems. The basic problems are not solved by drugs any more than drink solves the problems for the alcoholic. The lucky ones who eventually "put down" the use of drugs do so on their own. Having gone through the stage of having been a user does not contribute necessarily to any greater insights into their



selves than they would have derived through systematic self examination of their selves. The use of drugs merely prolongs the period in which they are struggling with who they are until they come to the realization that they must behave as responsible individuals in society. Those who continue to remain "strung out" on drugs are likely to be sociopaths; they have become dependent upon them; their problems are never solved and probably never will be due to a character disorder. The use of drugs merely complicates the relationship problem and hinders the resolution of such problems. "Putting down" is a symbolic conquering of personal and interpersonal "hang-ups."

At the time of this writing the author leads a group of male teenagers whose ages range from fifteen to eighteen, all of whom are "users" of "pot, LSD, and speed." In this group only one of them could be characterized as a sociopath. One is a border-line schizophrenic. His father died when he was five. His mother is schizophrenogenic. Bruce is the only one with a totally absent father. All come from troubled homes. "Father" is "absent" in every case in that there is no communication between fathers and sons. The mothers usually over-compensate for the father's severity or inconsistency of discipline by overindulgence or solicitousness.

Unfortunately this group cannot be used for the purpose of proving the main thesis of this work. It is described here as an example of how such a group may be used within the church setting for working with boys and girls who have suffered a father loss. With this in mind, the group and its practical aspects will now be discussed in more detail.

All of the members of this present group are "poor achievers." All have above average I.Q.'s. Two have been "busted." There are certain rules regarding the operation of the group. There is a fee of \$3.00 per person for a weekly hour and a half session. The boys come from well-to-do families so there is no financial hardship connected with the fee for any of them, but several of the boys are paying for it out of their allowance because they do not wish their parents to know they are attending. There is a "scholarship" fund from which they may borrow to pay for the sessions. Money is not the object. It is a device to help them to realize that these sessions are not gossip sessions. If one person has a tendency to gossip in order to keep from dealing with the real problems that are troubling them, the rest bring pressure to bear upon the gossipier backed up by money to bring the interaction back to the vital issues. Other than the rule that gossiping will

not be tolerated by the group, it is agreed that if a member comes to a session "stoned" the group understands that he is not welcome to the group in his condition. The issues that are dealt with are discussed at a "gut" level, usually dealing with their feelings about their parents, others in the community, authority figures, each other and themselves. No attempt is made to tell them what to do, merely to understand themselves and what causes them to be constantly in trouble and unhappy with themselves. The sessions are not recorded because they would prefer to speak freely and honestly. They are paranoid. By their own choice the initial group decided to keep it an all male group. Later groups of parents who have children who are in trouble with the police or are about to be will be started. Hopefully, a mixed group of teenagers and their parents will be started to help bridge the gap between generations.

The success of the operation at the church is perhaps judged best by the fact that the high school counselors, the probation office, and the police are referring problem children and their parents to the church for help which they feel no other organization is equipped or willing to do. There is no attempt on our part to proselyte them into becoming church members; they are merely expected to behave in an adult manner,

and come to realize that being "straight" has advantages over irresponsible behavior.

### A Note on Counseling "Techniques"

We have used Clinebell's revized model for pastoral counseling<sup>21</sup> as our model. We have found that the "older" Rogerian client-centered technique (once so popular among clergymen) does not work well with adolescents. The concept of person-centered counseling<sup>22</sup> is conducive to establishing initial rapport between the adolescent and the clergyman, however. "The minister's essential humanity is one of the precious things he has to share in all his relationships."<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the person-centered approach is at the core of our "technique" for it works best with teenagers, but working with relationships is our primary goal. Often this first begins between pastor and the individual, and from there to the group, or the other way around, then from the group to interaction within the family, and thence to responsible behavior within the community. Intra-psychic problems are dealt with through relationships also, for the interaction between members of one's own peer group, the

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<sup>21</sup>Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 27-40.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

support the individual gains from the group, is therapeutically helpful in our experience.

### B. Counseling With the Stepfather

The pastoral counselor should acquaint the stepfather with his importance in the healthy development of his stepchildren. He can become a substitute father in every sense of the word and reap emotional rewards, but there are dangers. His becoming a substitute father at an older age is made more difficult because of the child's "loyalty" to his real father.<sup>24</sup> Other dangers to which the stepfather is subject are the cause for many adverse feelings and stereotypes which have arisen. These in themselves should alert him to the importance of his role and the successful carrying out of it.

The stepfather should avoid trying to supplant the biological father. Often the absent father is idealized and the stepfather cannot possibly measure up to this impossible standard.<sup>25</sup> The stepfather may be resented by the stepchildren because he has "stolen" the love of mother from the child and the absent father.

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<sup>24</sup> Egleson, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

Stepfather may be regarded as a usurper.<sup>26</sup> The stepfather cannot impose himself upon a child without the child's consent. No matter how eager he is to perform his functions, he cannot do so unless he is accepted by the child. Therefore, how can he gain the child's confidence and thus be accepted by the child?

First, he should not assume authority over the stepchildren by fiat. If he attempts to discipline them, conflict may result, with the mother siding with her children in their rejection of his authority.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the mother should not place the stepfather in the impossible role of becoming an arbitor in her disciplining of her children if the stepfather has not achieved this position by mutual consent of mother and children. The mother and the stepfather should always agree to the authority functions in regard to disciplining the stepchildren. This agreement is much the same that should occur in a "normal" household. In other words, each should support the other in matters of discipline, and under no circumstances be in disagreement in front

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<sup>26</sup>William C. Smith, "The Stepchild," in Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis (eds.) Readings in Marriage and Family (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), p. 312.

<sup>27</sup>Egleson, op. cit., p. 200.

of the children.<sup>28</sup>

Second, the stepfather should attempt to become a "significant other." The role he may play, initially at least, is similar to that of a "Big Brother," in which the child is not led to feel that his "new daddy" has taken the place of his "real daddy." The stepfather should assure the stepchildren that he does not expect them to love him the way they do their real father, but that he wants only to be friends with them, that he cares for them, and that they are important to him.

Third, if conflict arises among the members, they should enter into counseling before insurmountable battle lines are formed and another broken home results. The pastor may very well fill the role of counselor, but he should be aware that these conflicts may run deep and often it is advisable to refer to a trained therapist.

### C. Counseling With the Mother

#### 1) The Pre-natal Period.

As was pointed out earlier there is evidence to support the "old wives' tales" that a mother's emotional

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<sup>28</sup>Martin Grotjahn, Psychoanalysis and the Family Neurosis (New York: Norton, 1960), p. 52.

states are transmitted to the unborn child.<sup>29</sup> Even if this were considered an unimportant factor, the pastor is concerned for the welfare of the mother during the pre-natal period. When the "father" is absent during this period, it may be for a number of reasons:

- a. The girl may be unmarried
- b. The husband may have deserted her
- c. He may be on overseas duty, hospitalized, in prison
- d. Death may have occurred
- e. Divorce may have caused the separation.

Counseling would take the form most appropriate for the situation. For instance, if the girl is unmarried, the pastor may be called upon to help the girl decide if she needs to get married, have the baby, keep it or adopt it out, or he may have to dissuade her from getting an illegal abortion. These situations are too complex to be dealt with specifically within the limits and scope of this study, but the pastor must be available to the girl as a guide and an understanding counselor. He must be ready to counsel with the girl's parents, to secure their understanding cooperation. He should be her friend, to support her in her plight, her grief, her aloneness, giving her the assurance that he is a concerned person who genuinely cares for her as a person.

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<sup>29</sup> See pages 25-27.



The health of the yet unborn child is to be considered, but primarily the concern should be toward the mother-to-be, for it is she who will give the child the warmth and maternal love that an infant needs.

2) During the Oral Period

The Heinsteins<sup>30</sup> and Ross and Johnson<sup>31</sup> studies, which were related to the personality of the mother and the manner the infant is fed and handled by her, both indicated the importance of the mother's emotional state during this period when "basic trust" is established. An understanding pastor may help the mother to release her tensions and anxieties while she is away from the infant. He may help ease her emotional conflict over her husband's absence, which she may inadvertently be transferring to her infant, by encouraging her to vent her feelings to him. He may suggest that female relatives, such as her mother, sister, or aunt give her help in the care and feeding of the infant, especially if she

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<sup>30</sup>M. I. Heinsteins, "Behavioral Correlates of Breast-feeding Regimes Under Varying Parent-Infant Relationships," Child Development, XXVIII:4 (1963).

<sup>31</sup>Helen Ross and Adelaide M. Johnson, Psychiatric Interpretation of the Growth Process (Chicago: Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1961), p. 3.

is tense. He may suggest that male relatives be available so that they may give the child its bottle and the like, so that the infant gets the feel of masculine handling. Relatives should be encouraged to be close to the mother so that they "support her emotionally and help her maintain that harmonious contented mood in the aura of which the infant thrives."<sup>32</sup> It is important that the mother be advised not to over-indulge the infant so that she becomes an overprotective mother in order to compensate for an emotional void left by the father's absence.

### 3) During the Anal Period

According to the Jackson study<sup>33</sup> mothers use more punitive or aggressive methods in controlling their children than do fathers. This study together with other studies dealing with habit training leads one to conclude that in the absence of a father, the mother may be even more severe in control (toilet) training of her baby than she would were the father present in the household. Overprotectiveness may also result from the father's absence.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>John Bowlby, Maternal Care and Mental Health (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), p. 13.

<sup>33</sup>P. W. Jackson, "Verbal Solutions to Parent-Child Problems," Child Development, XXVII (1956).

<sup>34</sup>David M. Levy, Maternal Overprotection (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).

Mother, trying to be both mother and father to the child, beset by guilts over her supposed fault in the father's absence, may react to her baby in an erratic and inconsistent manner. She may vacillate between passive and punitive training of the baby. On the one hand she may impose severe training, then feel guilty over her severity and then compensate by a period of passivity.

Erikson suggests that this is a period when doubts and shame are engendered in the baby and may lead to a paranoid personality. It is the opinion of the author that it is also a time when conditioned double-bind interaction between mother and child may begin leading to a schizoid personality.<sup>35</sup>

The pastor, aware of the criticalness of this period, may suggest to the mother that she watch out for over-protective behavior on her part, and that she be consistent in her training of the baby. Because she may feel compelled to devote all of her attention to the baby, the pastor may suggest and arrange that she establish a life outside the home. So that she may not become preoccupied with the child, both to the detriment of the child and herself, the pastor may help her to

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<sup>35</sup>Gregory Bateson, D. D. Jackson, J. Haley and J. H. Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," Behavioral Science, I (1956), 251-264.

become active in the community and in the church.

4) During the Phallic Stage

This is the period in which the child in the absence of a father will create a fantasy father. Unfortunately, the child will create an idealistic and feminine fantasy picture of the absent father. In the boy this may cause the boy to avoid appropriate masculine behavior and his proper identification with masculine sex-type behavior is disrupted. For the little girl she may develop a fantasy picture of the masculine role along feminine lines also. This may cause her later to choose an effeminate male for a husband or go through life continually seeking a father in each man she meets, none of whom would or could become a suitable mate to match the image she has fantasized.

In referring to the absent father the mother must avoid belittling him or speaking disparagingly of him, yet at the same time she must avoid picturing him in such an unrealistic way so as to reinforce an idealized image of him. In the case of divorce or separation, it is most important that the mother invite the father to visit the children often so that his real presence will counteract the fantasized image she may attempt to create.

To the young child the father's absence may mean that father does not love him. The boy has strong feelings of guilt because of his love for the mother and is a rival with his father. He may unconsciously feel that father's absence is a fulfillment of the Oedipal wish to get rid of his father in order to have mother for his own. The little girl may experience guilts similar to those of the boy, except that her feelings of love for father are so strong that she wants to replace her mother. Her father's leaving may be interpreted by her as being a punishment for her feeling this way. On the other hand, the frustrated Oedipal love may increase in her an idealization of her absent father. Children of both sexes are likely to experience a feeling toward their mother which is ambivalent in nature and they may manifest anxiety related to sex throughout the rest of their lives, and in some cases become overtly homosexual.

It is advisable that a father substitute be found for the children at this age. The father substitute may come from a number of sources. The pastor may suggest a brother, her own father, an uncle, or some other male who is a relative. If no family, or close male friend of the family is available, the pastor is in an ideal position to suggest single and eligible male companions who may act as substitute fathers for the children. He

may suggest that they accompany the mother and the children to church-sponsored activities as well as community affairs. He may also suggest that the mother join "Parents Without Partners." Unfortunately, this excellent organization seems to have many more women in it than men.

#### 5) During Latency

The boy during this period will want to be with his same-sexed peer group and with same-sexed authority figures. The pastor is an ideal father substitute during this age period. The mother should encourage his being with males as much as possible. She should be advised that her boy's pulling away from her is normal and that she has not failed. If there are no male relatives to whom she may turn him over for companionship, she may look into the Big Brother organization in which her boy is scientifically matched to an adult male who has likewise been selected as a suitable male figure to whom the boy may relate. Most major cities have a Big Brother organization. Although the number of adult males is less than needed for absent-father boys, her boy may be fortunate in being matched with a Big Brother who acts as a father substitute.

The church offers many opportunities for constant male companionship if the pastor is willing to put in

the time to arrange such a program. A member of the laity may assume this responsibility, however, arranging for men and boys to be together for various sporting events and outings in which they may do masculine activities together.

The pastor may advise against Cub scouts. This is usually run by mothers with little opportunity for adult male companionship. Indian Guides may be suggested, but they require that the boy's father be present at all meetings. If a father substitute could be found, Indian Guides would be helpful. Little League and Pony Football leagues are another possibility. It must be pointed out, however, that mother should not attempt to be a father substitute for her son or daughter. She has a difficult enough time trying to be a mother without the added burden of trying to be someone for whom she is not qualified. The inherent danger in female-dominated organizations, such as the Cub Scouts, is obvious, but not so obvious is the increasingly dominant role of mothers in such "all male" organizations such as Little League baseball. The mother who assumes the father substitute role with the hysteria so malevolently displayed by so many Little League mothers (even those who have husbands at home) is adopting a pernicious role which can only bring harm to her boy.

## 6) During Puberty

When children reach puberty they are confronted with the need to emancipate themselves from all authority figures in their search for identity and autonomy. Both sexes need a father at this time of development, however. The Oedipal situation usually reoccurs. If a father were present the daughter would likely turn her affection toward her father and away from her mother. In the absence of a father she may turn away from the mother and "throw" herself at the boys who successively become father substitutes. Mother may become anxious about this behavior on the part of her daughter. Her own frustrated sex life may cause her to project her own anxieties over her daughter's behavior. Her tenseness may cause the daughter to rebel even more in her attempt to extricate herself from her mother, and at the same time she may experience guilt over her behavior. For the boy his wish for independence conflicts with the mother's need to be needed.

The mother may feel that she is losing her children, and indeed she is. The empty nest is fast becoming an unwelcome reality for her. Her children are pulling away from her and beginning to live their own lives. She no longer feels needed. The amount of emotional investment she has made in her children will determine how well



she meets this challenge.

The pastor may help the mother through this trying period by offering her an opportunity to become involved in activities outside of her family. He should be available to counsel with her and allow her to talk out her problems, both to him and in groups.

#### 7) The Problem of Transference

The pastor is a father figure for many of his congregation. He may find himself having to deal with transference problems when he takes on the task of counseling with a mother whose husband is absent. As every clergyman has perhaps experienced, there will be a few female members of his congregation who will fantasize him as a "love" object. They will "love him from afar," and it usually passes in time. For the husbandless mother, however, especially if the pastor is a warm and understanding person, he may become the recipient of positive transference feelings that may be overtly expressed in the counseling situation. There are various ways in which the pastor may deal with this problem without minimizing the woman's femininity, so that she does not feel totally rejected.

First of all, the pastor may be subtly inviting the transference. He may unconsciously be encouraging

the transference in order to satisfy a need within himself. He should be aware of these needs and stop the nonsense before it gets out of control. He may be sorely tempted to take advantage of the woman's advances. Many a good ministry has been ruined as a result of this problem.

The pastor may suggest meeting a number of eligible men of his acquaintance and that she join a counseling group within the church. The counseling group may be patterned along the lines suggested by Clinebell.<sup>36</sup>

Regarding groups, the church where the author is assisting has had, during this past year, two ten week courses directed by Dr. Thomas Gordon which is called "Parent Effectiveness Training."<sup>37</sup> It has been well subscribed and those who attend have only the best to say for how this has helped them not only in communicating with their children but outside the home as well. There is a charge for this course which may be out of reach for many people, but each clergyman may equip himself to handle similar "courses" with proper training, meeting with unmarried or divorced people of both sexes.

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<sup>36</sup>Clinebell, Mental Health . . . , pp. 164-170.

<sup>37</sup>Dr. Thomas Gordon, 110 South Euclid Avenue, Pasadena, California; telephone 213 + 793-1784.

#### D. Counseling With The Absent Father

##### 1) Father Who Is Away

In the case of divorce, the father is no longer a husband, but he remains a father, not only in his own eyes, but in the lives and fantasies of his children.

Counseling with a father who is totally and physically absent from his children, such as would be the case in which the father has to move far away from his children for reasons beyond his control, or when the mother remarries and moves away, leaves the counselor with not much to work on. The pastor may suggest to the absent father, however, that he is still an important person to his children, and that he must not let them slip out of his life. In writing to them, remembering their birthdays and such, he should continually remind them that he loves them, and that the divorce (separation) had nothing to do with how he feels about them. In order not to allow himself to become too idealized a figure he should arrange to have the children visit him, or be with the children during the summer holidays, so that he may relate to them on a person-to-person basis. He should be warned, however, that although this should be a "fun time" for all concerned, the father should not allow himself to become overly permissive in regard to

their behavior. He should be firm but loving in his disciplining of them. He cannot let himself become subtly competitive with the mother, pitting his permissiveness against her restrictions, and vice versa. He cannot allow himself to become an idealized "haven" to whom the children may escape in order to get away from their mother's "severe" disciplining. Some fathers may unconsciously encourage this role of sanctuary, and allow themselves to be manipulated by their children in order to satisfy a need to be wanted, but this behavior invites disaster. The absent father should not allow the children to "run to Daddy" every time their mother imposes appropriate disciplinary action for irresponsible behavior. Even though he may hunger for his children's love and feel their need for him, he must support the mother in areas of control, and not allow himself to become a disrupting wedge between the mother and the children.

If the mother remarries, he should encourage the children to have positive regard for their stepfather. He must convey to them that the stepfather is in a precarious position, and they must not take advantage of him. He must inform them that any reasonable discipline administered by the stepfather will be supported by him because the stepfather is a substitute for the disciplinary action which he, the father, would have to do were he

living with them.

## 2) Visitation Rights

The court in awarding custody of the children to the mother usually provides visitation rights to the father. There may be an undercurrent of bitterness which exists between the mother and her ex-husband, but the father is still the father. It would be helpful if the pastor could counsel with the mother and the ex-husband so that they each will avoid prolonging the hostility and recriminations that were exchanged which precipitated the divorce or separation. In counseling with them he may point out to them how important it is for the children to have a masculine person around at each stage of the child's development. The biological father with visitation rights should be that masculine person if at all possible. The following are some of the suggestions which the pastor may use as recommendations:

a. The Absent Father During Infancy. If the divorce or separation takes place during infancy, the father must be allowed to hold and cuddle the infant in a warm and affectionate manner. In this way, the infant learns to distinguish between masculinity and the softer feminine handling of the mother. He should talk to the child softly so that the child can distinguish between

differently pitched voices and so learn another aspect between masculinity and femininity.<sup>38</sup> This helps the child to become independent of the mother and to learn the nature of transferring relationships beyond the mother and so enter into the world.<sup>39</sup> The father's frequent presence helps to break any subtle over-identification that may develop between the mother and the child.

b. Absent Father During Anal Stage. The Absent father visiting the home of his former wife and his baby at this stage of development is important, for this is a time when the child is learning the meaning of training. This is one time when the father must be cautious that he does nothing to create discord between his ex-wife and himself. If tensions exist the mother may unconsciously react toward the adventurous baby in a punitive manner in her training of him. The father should support the mother in a consistent development of the child's habit formation. Father must watch out for a tendency to want the child to progress in his training more than the child is capable. He must avoid criticizing the

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<sup>38</sup>Tess Forrest, "Paternal Roots of Female Development," Contemporary Psychoanalysis, III:1 (1966), 21-28.

<sup>39</sup>Joost Meerloo, "The Father Cuts the Cord: The Role of the Father as Initial Transference Figure," American Journal of Psychotherapy, X (1956), 471-480.

mother's methods. If conflict arises due to misunderstandings regarding the proper training of the child they should seek outside help.

c. Absent Father During the Phallic Stage. This is a period of development in which the father is needed perhaps more than at any other stage. It is a time of masculine identification and appropriate sex-type behavior. The father should be present so that the child does not create a stereotyped, feminine, idealistic fantasy picture of him.<sup>40</sup> He should be present so that the child may more easily resolve the Oedipal conflict.<sup>41</sup>

The father should be told that a triangle may occur at this time and that his frequent presence is required to allay any guilts on the part of the boy, and intensified fantasies on the part of the girl. The father should be free to rough-house with the boy, to be near so that his father's presence lessens his fantasies of replacing the father in his mother's affections. Father must help the child to reduce his guilt over the father's usual absence from the household. Father is

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<sup>40</sup>George R. Bach, "Father-Fantasies in Father-Separated Children," Child Development, XVII (1946), 63-80.

<sup>41</sup>Everett S. Ostrovsky, Father to the Child, (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1959), p. 147.

needed so that the Oedipal conflict may be resolved in a healthy manner.

Father should be present as much as possible so that the little girl may know that she is loved by father, and that his frequent absence from the household is not to punish her for loving her father so much "that mother has driven him away." The father must not invite inordinate display of affection from his daughter at this age, for by so doing he unconsciously tempts her sexually heightening the Oedipal intensity which becomes more difficult for her to resolve.

d. Absent Father During Latency. This is the period in which the male child identifies strongly with his father and his same-sexed peers. Father is most important during this period. Father should be advised that the boy needs his father, and that he needs to do masculine type activities with his son. Father should know that if he is not present at this time his boy may develop feminine, passive-dependent tendencies.<sup>42</sup> He should be told, however, that it is quite normal for his boy to pal around with boys of his own age. The boy should be supported in his attempt to be a boy among boys.

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<sup>42</sup> Charles R. Shaw, The Psychiatric Disorder of Children (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1966), p.131.



e. Absent Father During Puberty. As discussed earlier, adolescence is a time for the children to emancipate themselves from their parents, yet at the same time the boy in his effort to establish sexual identification seeks reinforcement by being with men and other boys.<sup>43</sup> The Oedipal situation reoccurs, and must be resolved. Father's presence helps to lessen the boy's anti-social behavior. He needs paternal authority and control in order to stabilize him during this acting-out period.

To conclude this section dealing with the absent father at each stage of development, the pastor must constantly remind the father how important he is to his children's healthy development. At no time must the father bicker over how the mother is raising the children. If they have differences of opinion over the best methods of rearing the children, they should counsel with someone outside the family, such as a pastor or some other counselor. Under no circumstances should the father use the children as a weapon against his former wife. The children will use this competitiveness between

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<sup>43</sup> Arthur P. Noyes and Lawrence C. Kolb, Modern Clinical Psychiatry (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1966), p. 29.

mother and father to gain favor, but in playing one parent against the other, every time they win they lose.

### 3. IN SUMMARY

The family is the primary institution of our culture because it is within the family structure that man's emotional-intellectual adaptive mechanisms have been and are being developed. The clergyman, as pastor to his congregation, concerned with the welfare of each of his members, knowing that if one member of the extended family--the church--suffers, the whole family suffers. If the family within the extended family is broken, the Body of Christ is broken. The pastor not only has the duty, but the opportunity offered to few men, to reconcile the brokenness that besets a family in which there is a father loss. Not only does he have an opportunity to deal with grief and separation anxiety to the surviving members, but he may counsel with them and help them to prevail despite their loss. When a father is lost to a household, whatever the cause, severe adjustments must be made by all the surviving members, and by the "absent" father himself. The pastor's role as counselor may cause him to be called upon to repair a broken relationship between husband and wife. He may do the following: he can emphasize the importance

of a father to the healthy growth of his children; he can point out the adverse effects his absence may have upon them. This may cause a couple on the brink of divorce to give it serious second thoughts. Perhaps they may cause the couple to enter into counseling with a trained marriage counselor which they had not really intended to do. Perhaps an otherwise broken relationship might be mended. Failing this, the pastor has an opportunity to counsel with all members of the broken family so that each member may make the best adjustment to the loss of a most vital member of the household. The pastor, as a masculine figure, may serve as an adult model with whom the children may identify. The pastor may suggest father substitutes from among the laity, to help fill this much needed role. The pastor, within the church structure, may establish groups who meet with a common purpose of trying to help one another understand their roles: mothers to their fatherless children, or fathers who are no longer husbands but who have an obligation to their children.

## CHAPTER XII

### FURTHER RESEARCH ON THE ABSENT FATHER

Specific suggestions for further scientific investigation have been made throughout the study, some of which have been stated in the form of operational hypotheses. Beyond these, however, further research in the following general areas are suggested:

- 1) The emotionally absent father
- 2) The effect an absent father has on the type of father role his son will play
- 3) Career choices of an absent father's child
- 4) The effect an absent father has upon prolonged and excessive use of alcohol and drugs
- 5) The effect an absent father has upon psychophysiological disorders, such as asthma and ulcers
- 6) The concept of God in the child of an absent father as compared to that of the child who has not suffered such a loss.

#### The Emotionally Absent Father

It became increasingly evident during the preparation of this study that the emotionally absent father often causes greater psychic harm to his child than does the physically absent father. Studies on the emotionally absent father are practically non-existent, however, fewer by far than studies on the physically absent father.

Nevertheless, this study has avoided making interpretations and inferences from one type of study to the other. That is, studies having to do with the physically absent father were not used to form conclusions that would apply to the emotionally absent father. The temptation to do so was resisted because such a practice runs the risk of faulty interpretation.

The emotionally absent father is a rich field for research, and a vast amount of work is indicated. Present assumptions regarding the emotionally absent father are in need of scientific validation.

#### Father Role Played by Absent Father's Son

The familiar aphorism, "like father, like son," is supported by scientific investigation as well as clinical and lay observations. The popular books of Eric Berne and Missildine,<sup>1</sup> for instance, deal with the Parent within each of us. We internalize our parents. The role we play as a parent to our children is reflected in how we identified with our same-sexed and cross-sexed parent. Our parents became models by which we consciously and/or

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<sup>1</sup>Eric Berne, Games People Play (New York: Grove Press, 1964), and Eric Berne, Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy (New York: Grove Press, 1961). W. Hugh Missildine, Your Inner Child of the Past (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963).

unconsciously patterned our own parent roles toward our offspring. Therefore, what kind of father (or mother for the daughter) will the child become who has suffered a father loss? More precisely, at what stage or stages of the child's life is the potential parent role most adversely affected by a father loss?

### Career Choices of An Absent Father's Child

One's choice of a particular kind of career is determined by a number of subjective factors. Does the child of an absent father choose one type of career over another? For instance, lacking a father, would the child be more likely to choose a career in government, the armed services, a giant organization, or some such paternalistic organization over another career which is less paternal in its treatment of employees? In other words, feeling the loss of a father, and seeking to compensate for this loss, may determine the predilection of one profession over another. If such an investigation were to reveal a predictable vocational choice, this information would be helpful in counseling with fatherless young people in their program of study leading to their career choice.

### The Effect An Absent Father Has Upon Addiction

Many investigators consider the characteristic trait of alcoholics and drug addicts to be immature, passive-dependent persons with unrealistically high levels of aspiration and an inability to tolerate tension and failure.<sup>2</sup> Yet, despite numerous efforts, investigators have failed to find a specific personality constellation which is characteristic of alcoholics and drug users which can be used to predict loss of control. Inadequate design is the reason for the failure of many of these studies. Apparently, longitudinal studies are needed to delineate personality characteristics which seemingly predispose certain individuals to resort to alcohol and drug use rather than some other defensive pattern for coping with stress. Furthermore, the absent father factor needs to be recognized as etiologically important in the development of dependency personalities. For instance, this study has repeatedly shown that in the family where an absent father occurs, frequently the mother chooses to play the roles of both mother and father and fails to do either well. Almost inevitably

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<sup>2</sup>James C. Coleman, Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1964), p. 431.

the child has problems in learning who he is, what is expected of him, and what to expect from others. Alcohol and drugs often help such a person to achieve gratifying feelings of adequacy and self-esteem and blissful relief from his anxiety and tension.

Alcoholics Anonymous and Synanon have been successful in controlling alcohol and drug abuse. Both are structured along similar lines, with Synanon being more authoritative over its members. Both organizations presuppose a dependency on the part of its members, necessitating a continuing need on the part of the members to remain attached to the organization. Very few escape from this dependency for long. According to orthodox theory the alcoholic is an oral-dependent person forever seeking the good breast. It would seem that AA and Synanon become for many of their members a substitute mother. On the other hand, both of these organizations tend to be authoritative--i.e., masculine. Members are forever committed to its discipline. Perhaps AA and Synanon become for many of their members a substitute father rather than a substitute mother. As was shown in the case of delinquency, children tend to need more rigid outside control over their behavior following the age of twelve. Perhaps, too, the alcoholic and drug user, who seems to lack inner controls. Therefore, does



the loss or absence of a father, particularly around the ages of six and again following the age of twelve, predict a weakened or ill-formed superego, increasing the likelihood of a dependency need on alcohol and drugs?

### Psychophysiologic Disorders And The Absent Father

Many psychosomatic disorders such as asthma and ulcers are considered to be the consequence of an individual's vulnerability to particular stresses and continuing inability to handle the emotional tensions that are aroused. Available studies of patient's family backgrounds emphasize the role of dominant, overly protective mothers who were uncomfortable with the child's emotions and tended to be unduly restrictive of his activities, thus arousing considerable covert hostility on the part of the child.<sup>3</sup> The father is seldom given the importance of the mother in such cases, yet he is generally described as being typically passive, an inadequate male model for the child, or absent from the

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<sup>3</sup>Else M. Goldberg, Family Influences and Psychosomatic Illness (London: Tavistock, 1959). V. Szyrynsk, "Defective 'Psychological Weaning' In Psychosomatic Pathology," Psychosomatics, I (1960), 22-25. C. Wenar, et. al., Origins of Psychosomatic and Emotional Disturbances: (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

household. As in other problem areas covered in this study, more needs to be known about the etiological importance of father in the pathology of psychosomatic disorders.

### The Concept of God in an Absent Father Child

The concept of God is depicted in the Old Testament anthropomorphically and as Spirit, and in the New Testament as Father as well. Some people, brought up in a Christian culture, will conceive of God as a Father who is either majestic, remote and severe, or conversely, kind, benevolent and gentle. Yet some individuals cannot picture God anthropomorphically at all, but tend to visualize God as an unseen force, angry at times, arbitrary, unpredictable, and calm at others. Some persons fail to see God at all, whereas others refuse to acknowledge the existence of God in any form.

Is there a connection between the presence and absence of one's biological father and one's conception of God's existence? Does the concept of God emerge as severe or gentle depending upon the image each person has of his own father? Does a person have an authority problem with God because he may have (or have had) an authority problem with his own father? Is God

"dead" because one's own father is dead or absent (physically or emotionally)?

These and many other questions emerge, and suggest an intriguingly interesting endeavor for one who may wish to pursue this line of investigation on the absent father and the concept of God.

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